A fiction supplement: "Growing Up Woman"

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THE North American Review

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A Carnival of diverse Animals, including sharks, wolves, horses, sea otters, goats, and assorted humans. . . .

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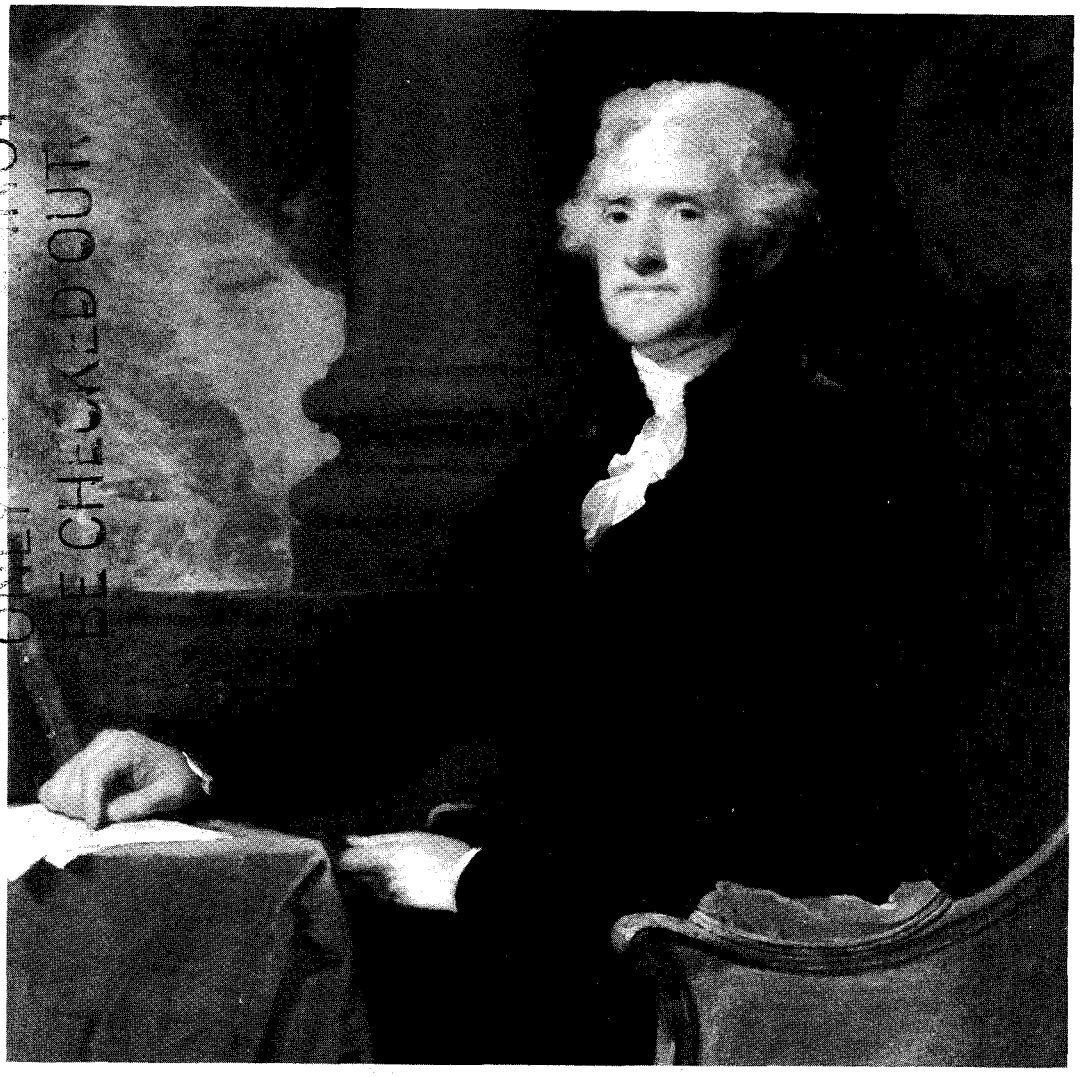

Sir Monticello Mar. 27. 25.

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Th: J.

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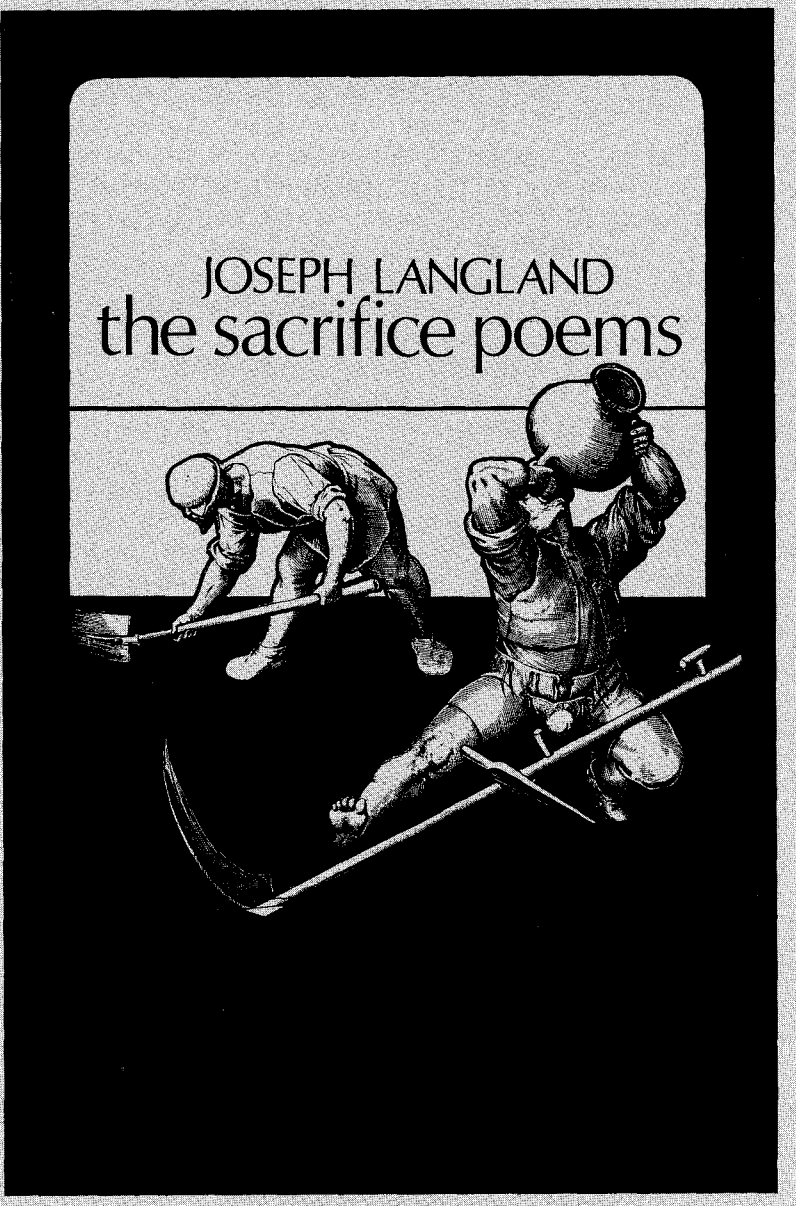

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The shark appears to be a creature whose time has come ("How ought we to feel about sharks?" we asked an ecologist friend. "There are a lot of them," he said; "they aren't an endangered species yet."), and this issue of the NAR is, perhaps, open to the charge of being "trendy". In any case, both Geoffrey Green's fiction (page 16) and Larry Sturhahn's film column (page 72) betray fascinations, shark-wise—the former for such legends as sailors tell, the latter for that film currently scarifying the neighborhood theatres. Then again, if you prefer wolves—surely a more likable creature, and one which *is* in real danger of being obliterated by predatory men—perhaps the Lopez-Bauguess collaboration (page 60) will attract you.

Having a secure faith in coincidence, happenstance, and other evidences of secret logic in the literary universe, we're pleased by the seven stories drawn together on pages 27-56 under the general heading of "Growing Up Woman". We scarcely ever *plan* the NAR; it *occurs*. So it was with this present feature, comprising a variety of (we think) insights into the integrities of womankind.

Some notes: The essay by Joseph Meeker (page 4) was originally presented in May before the Genetics Society of Canada, at its meeting in Regina. . . . All of Joseph Langland's *Sacrifice* poems (many of them published in the summer NAR) have been collected into an attractive volume that includes an introductory essay. Entitled *The Sacrifice Poems,* the book may be ordered from this magazine; price: $3.95. You might tell your librarian. . . . A new book of poems by Daniel Halpern, *Street Fire,* has been published by Viking. . . . And a first book of poems by our own poetry editor, Peter Cooley, will be brought out this fall by the University of Missouri Press.

A clarification: The poem on page 12 of the summer NAR ("Spring Poem") is by Kenneth Lash; a confusion in layout may have made its authorship unclear, and we apologize for our clumsiness.

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The North American Review

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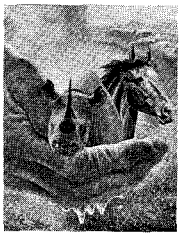

Joseph W. Meeker

Genes and Clever Livers

Lewis Thomas, president of the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, has publicly confessed that he is less intelligent than his liver. If he were consciously in control of hepatic decisions for his own body, Dr. Thomas would expect to make a mess of things. He feels the same way about all his working parts: "They are better off without my intervention, whatever they do."[1] Autonomic systems, he concludes, are best left autonomous. It is refreshing to find a major scientist and medical man who feels humility before his liver.

It has not always been so. We have inherited a long tradition which proclaims the superiority of human mentality over all systems which lack consciousness. When the human brain reached a level of evolutionary development permitting it to understand some of the processes going on in the world, it promptly began to manage and manipulate those processes in the service of what it took to be human advantage. With hindsight acquired through several thousands of years of human experience, we are now in a position to see that the brain, in its pride and power, has made some colossal errors.

Many such errors can be conveniently lumped together under the heading, "environmental crisis". In the service of human interests, natural systems have been modified and their purposes redirected so drastically that they no longer serve even human needs, let alone the requirements of other species. Hydrologic systems which have always managed to maintain a decent water supply on the planet are now hard put to keep up their good work. The earth's atmosphere has become hazardous to the health of all creatures depending upon it. Populations have been altered by explosions of human numbers and deplosions—to the point of extinction—in the numbers of other species. A world formerly arranged so as to distribute food energy more or less equitably among the living creatures on its surface is no longer able to feed even the one proud species that has claimed all food for its own. Perhaps we are all a bit less intelligent than our livers and the other evolved systems upon which life depends.

The trouble is that the human brain often seeks power before it seeks understanding. It is customary to say that scientists discover how things work before engineers step in to apply scientific knowledge for human benefit, but unfortunately that sequence is usually reversed. Genetic engineering is a good example. Some ten or twelve thousand years ago humans became genetic engineers when they discovered the techniques of plant and animal domestication. No knowledge of the principles of natural selection was needed to discover the human advantage of selective breeding which produced early cattle, sheep, and goats. Minor behavioral modifications were probably achieved first to assure tractability and to enforce the dependence of animals upon their human mentors. Later, it proved possible to modify also the anatomy and physiology of some animals for meat production, more abundant reproduction, and for hauling human loads. Anthropologists make much of the "revolution" which occurred with the advent of human pastoralism based upon domesticated animals, suggesting that at last mankind then emerged from the ranks of animals and began to achieve the supremacy over nature that was our destiny. They neglect to point out, however, that only about a dozen species of the million or more on the planet have proved susceptible to domestication during ten thousand years of trying, and that those species which have suffered domestication have not been deeply moved by the experience. Two or three generations without human intervention would largely unravel the work of ten millenia. Domestication, genetically speaking, is only skin deep.

Genetic engineering messed up the lives of billions of animals before scientists such as Darwin and Mendel came along to examine the principles which made it all possible. A little has been learned since Darwin about the influence of genetic modification upon species phylogeny, but as usual this information is lagging far behind the sophisticated techniques of practitioners who spend their days influencing genes. We remain now as we were ten thousand years ago: it is easier to do something than it is to know what we're doing. Very great knowledge is needed to understand any natural system or process; only rudimentary knowledge is required to alter or manipulate them. In the history of human civilization, engineering has generally come much too early and science has come much too late.

Acting in ignorance, we have discovered that we can significantly alter genetic structures without even trying to do so, merely as an accidental byproduct of some of our other engineering endeavors. A recent article in *Science* examines scores of environmental mutagenic hazards, from aspirin to X-rays, and proposes an elaborate and sophisticated screening procedure to find out what we are doing to our poor, battered genetic heritage.[2] Science, arriving late as usual, is now needed to uncover the effects of accidental engineering because it has not been able to inform engineers of the meaning of their actions in advance. The "engineers" in this case include the medical profession, cosmetic and pharmaceutical manufacturers, agricultural experts, military leaders, pesticide salesmen, and other such practical public servants who do not characteristically consult scientific journals before going to work in the morning. Even if they did, they would

1. Thomas, Lewis. *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher*. New York: Viking Press, p. 66.

2. Drake, John W. *et al*. "Environmental Mutagenic Hazards", *Science*, 14 February 1975, pp. 503-514.

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find pitifully little information there about the genetic implications of their activities. Nobody knows what is going on, but everybody keeps busy.

Even when elaborate scientific research is completed in advance of genetic engineering and used to direct its application, there is plenty of room for error. If livers are intelligent, genes are downright brilliant in finding ways to evade or adapt to the new predicaments posed for them by genetic engineers. A recent and significant example was the corn leaf blight which swept briefly across the United States five years ago. According to a report prepared by the National Academy of Sciences,[3] the blight occurred because genetic engineers had developed the perfect corn plant and persuaded virtually all farmers to use it. The Texas male-sterile cytoplasm which was the basis of this high-yielding, easily harvested strain, proved susceptible to a modest fungus which genetic evolution had quickly pieced together just for the occasion. Uniformity resting upon a single genetic character rendered the corn helpless against an organism which was specialized to attack exactly that character. The report also includes a warning of much larger disasters to come because of similar genetic uniformity in sorghum, sugar beets, wheat, and rice. When human wits are matched against intelligent genes, it's generally wise to bet on the genes.

But here we sit in the twentieth century with a long tradition of faith in the rightness of human engineering and a grand box of tools at our disposal to implement it. We are unlikely to lose our faith or to discard our tools overnight. With or without understanding, we will probably do whatever seems possible before we know whether it is wise or not.

When Lewis Thomas mused further upon the relationship between his intelligent liver and his scientific mind, he thought of a new way to apply technology. It is not easy to understand, but it is well worth pondering:

> I have a suggestion for a way out. Given the capacity to control autonomic functions, modulate brain waves, run cells, why shouldn't it be possible to employ exactly the same technology to go in precisely the opposite direction? Instead of getting in there and taking things over, couldn't we learn to disconnect altogether, uncouple, detach, and float free? You would only need to be careful, if you tried it, that you let go of the right end.[4]

3. *Genetic Vulnerability of Major Crops*. Washington D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1972.

The end to let go of is the one attached to the human ego and its passion for manipulating natural systems in the service of human pride. The end to hang onto is the one rooted in the adaptability of human intelligence, the most significant characteristic of our evolutionary history. If our mental, scientific, and engineering activities were guided by the principles of complexity and diversity which govern other natural systems, we would have a chance to be at home in the world even if not masters of it. That would merely require that we apply our engineering talents first to the processes of our own thoughts and feelings in order to establish correspondences between human consciousness and the other natural systems of life. With that accomplished, we might then know better what is worth doing and what is more wisely avoided.

Humans have not proved to be the world's most clever livers, but merely the most powerful. Intelligence and even wisdom reside in the evolved workings of many natural systems which lack both our consciousness and our addiction to meddling. If we were really clever livers—that is, clever at the business of living—we would nourish our own minds upon the principles we are able to discover at work in the natural systems around us, and those within us. □

4. Thomas, Lewis. *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher*. New York: Viking Press, p. 68.

DAVID STEINGASS

BY GREYHOUND WINDOW

Now we ride down into snow.
A town with more graves than people.
Sun throws semaphore on the tombstones.
A sudden blindness, a sledge
Between eyes. Waistdeep in snow
Small pines and cedars sink in winter twilight.
Everywhere I look
Trees float. Farmsteads fling like dust
In abandoned galaxies. All my life
I've learned right answers
To the wrong question. Now I see earth,
A single blast of fire, the promise of death
Firm as a handshake. A boy
Rakes rabbit pellets from a shed,
His rake in both hands like a sledge.
His furious eyes
Black spots, vulnerable as the coals of winter stars
Sinking into snow. Where he stands
Anything is up that's out
Of loneliness,
Which leads him each night to the cold ditch
Over the edge of the attic bed
In his father's house.
He breathes his prayers like frosted steel
Into the blue air.

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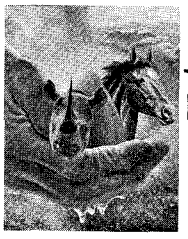

David Crownfield / Barry Targan

Visits to Both Coasts

1. CALIFORNIA NOTES

"In the province of the mind, whatever one believes to be true either is true or becomes true within certain limits to be found experientially and experimentally. These limits are beliefs to be transcended."

—John Lilly, *The Center of the Cyclone*

On an old ferry boat, now permanently berthed among the houseboats of Sausalito, in a room which had been Alan Watts' home until his death last year, fifty middle-aged San Franciscans listened to psychologist Joseph Chilton Pearce give a two-hour lecture on child development, language learning, and socialization. A hearer's attention wandered occasionally to a large red Japanese lantern, or to a window opening on the well in which the paddle wheel had been, or to various neatly-shelved relics of Watts' simple, aesthetically distinctive occupancy. Pearce explained at some length a child's tendency to assume that everything is possible, contrasting it with our assumption that what actually exists and happens excludes whole realms of incompatible alternatives. Suddenly, he was attributing to this childish openness the occurrence of the prodigy in art, music, or chess, and the high incidence of apparent extrasensory perception in children. He began to speak of it as "lost" rather than "outgrown", and suggested that the child's view is more adequate than the adult's. Our constant insistence to our children, at home and at school, that the world is full of threats—of uselessness, of corruption, of rejection, of death —terrifies them into filtering their experience through the rules and interpretations and other verbalizations we have taught them. They learn to substitute concepts for direct awareness, to talk to themselves about life instead of living it, and to become like us. According to Pearce, this process is not, as Freud thought, necessitated by the harshness of reality. On the contrary, our adult experience carries the negativity and harshness that it does precisely because we have learned to experience it that way. (Why did we ever start? How can we get back to life?)

* * *

A friend of mine in the Bay area is a magician, a student of ESP, and a communications consultant. He tells of being in a group whose leader proposed to transport them to a "sixth level of consciousness" where they could question the beings who inhabit that level. The leader, after some sort of induction process, announced. "You are now at the sixth level. You will shortly meet the inhabitants and can ask your questions."

Art says he didn't feel he was on any "sixth level"; he was lying on his back on a carpet, feeling he must look a damn fool if there was anyone around who wasn't participating. He thought, "How in the hell can I ask them anything when I don't even know they exist?"

Instantly, unbidden, the answer formed in his mind. "You don't have to know we exist in order to learn from us."

* * *

Stanley Keleman is a graduate of the Brooklyn streets as well as of psychiatric training institutes in Zurich and New York. Stanley is convinced that life is entirely the life of the body, that the sensitivity and responsiveness of tissue is what life is all about. His therapy aims to mobilize people's capacity to express themselves bodily, to respond in a sensory and mobile way to their world as they experience it.

"What is the starting point?" he replies to a questioner. "You can begin by taking any part of your self-experiencing, your body-experience, seriously. . . . Put more emphasis on experiencing and less on performing. We must get off the wheel of performance."

"If we really let go," he is asked, "isn't there a danger of disintegration?"

"Experience is capable of organizing itself," he growls, and goes on to talk about the rhythmic pattern of breathing, the flow of movement and rest, the pulsing and vibrating harmonies in which the body spontaneously organizes its life—except when we block and immobilize it with tension, insensitivity, and shallow breath.

Stanley's clients work through breathing, through kicking and screaming, through experiencing the tightness in their jaws, the imbalance in their posture, the immobility of their pelvis. As they begin to breathe, to be aware, to move, they begin to feel and come alive.

* * *

Charles Tart, of the University of California at Davis, is a psychologist specializing in empirical research into altered states of consciousness and ESP. He tells of one experiment in which subjects were to try to identify the moment at which Charlie, in another room, received an electric shock. In addition to signaling by pressing a button, they were wired for various physiological changes. The button-press signals were random; the physiological changes correlated quite closely with the actual moment of the shock. One is tempted to speculate that our bodies may know how to receive ESP, but our minds may be trained not to acknowledge it.

* * *

In an area so full of far-out people of one sort or another that some residents think the license plates should read, "California—the Altered State," Wayne Cook is unexpected. This former desert prospector and self-styled alcoholic still speaks and dresses like a back-country

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miner come to town for church. What he has to say is something else.

Wayne is a healer. His basic method is to examine the patient with a dowsing rod, and identify by the pattern of its oscillations where the polarity of her energies has gotten reversed(!). If the reversal can be attributed to some object she is wearing, he drains the adverse power of the object into an "energy sink"; if the body itself is reversed, he does a process by which the patient's energy system is linked with his own, and he reverses the whole system somehow, and then straightens himself out afterward.

A highly-successful surgeon and I watched Wayne work recently. I found his talk of "polarity reversals" and "heavy metals" unconvincing, and I was not satisfied that he didn't manipulate the rods. But the patients did seem to be better. My surgeon friend replied, "I agree; it doesn't make sense. But it seems to work. We don't know anything about how healing happens, but it doesn't seem to have anything to do with what system you use."

* * *

Among the tool-using animals, don't forget the sea otter, a common sight on the Big Sur coast. First he finds a handy stone. Then he dives, parks his stone on a submerged rock, plucks an abalone from the bottom, and retrieves his stone on the way up. At the surface, he floats on his back like a loafer at the beach, just beyond the breaking point of the surf. With one hand (such they seem) he holds the abalone on his chest; with the other, he bangs away at it with the stone. When he has broken the shell, he rests the stone on his tummy and proceeds to pick the meat out of the shell and eat it, as he floats nonchalantly up and down the waves. Finished, he gets rid of the shell, picks up his stone, and rolls over to dive for another.

* * *

"Close your eyes and relax deeply. Visualize a deep valley in the mountains. As you walk up the valley, you find a cave. Go in, and explore the cave. Within the next ten minutes, you will find in the cave a source of wisdom—an old man, a gem, an animal, whatever. Ask that source for advice, and then return to the valley." Ten minutes later, the whole group had been in their imagined caves, and returned with their advice. I had not gone far into my cave when I found a niche holding a bowl of gems. I asked for advice and was told, "Let go." Having already heard that too often, I said, "Isn't there anything more?" The answer was, "You already have the rest. When you have let go, you will know what it is."

This exploration and dialogue all happened in my imagination, guided by the leader's instructions. Yet the answer, especially the second part, surprised me. And the more I have explored its implications, the more I have learned about myself. The whole fantasy involves a sort of exploration of a Jungian archetypal structure. As a method of bringing to light and integrating dimensions of a person, and of mobilizing inner resources of unity and healing, this guided fantasy process is an aspect of psychosynthesis. Psychosynthesis was developed by the Italian psychiatrist, Roberto Assagioli, who believed the human unconscious has as much power for integration and healing as it does for causing the troubles that Freud and his successors explored. In a sense it is "Applied Jung."

* * *

Ida Rolf 's approach to what ails us is almost an opposite to Assagioli's. A physiologist, she has researched human posture problems and tissue immobilities for half a century and more. From her work she has developed a method of correcting posture through direct and intense pressure on the immobile points. As rigid masses of muscle and fascia break into their component bundles, they become able to move more freely. The chronic tensions that sway a back, freeze a pelvis, crook a neck or hunch a pair of shoulders are physically unlocked, and the body is once again able to align the legs, hips, and spine for balanced posture with a minimum of muscular work. Physiological tests show that, after Rolfing (officially called "Structural Integration"), muscles are more relaxed at rest and more energetic in action. And spines are visibly straighter, necks longer, shoulder down, walk looser.

That's all Rolf claims. But clients report that something else happens. The tensions that skew and lock our bodies have a history. The sway-backed, frozen-pelvis person frequently has adopted that posture in adolescent fear of sexuality, and has locked up not only the pelvis but sexual feeling. When the pelvis recovers its mobility, there is often a rush of sexual feeling. One whose shoulders were originally hunched in childhood fear of a parent may, as the tension releases, suddenly relive the whole scary three-year-old experience, and let that go, too. Rolf did not attempt to develop a psychotherapy, and makes only physical claims for her method. But many people who have experienced it, especially in conjunction with some form of emotional healing or growth therapy, have found it of profound psychological importance. I count myself among them. I am still discovering ways in which I am personally and emotionally freer for having been Rolfed.

* * *

Last summer a group of people spent a day having a peyote party at a ranch north of San Francisco. The day began with a little ritual which included a meditation on the coming of the light on the first day of creation. The setting was a kind of paradise, with warm sunshine, beautiful trees, nudity, swimming, fresh fruit to eat, and an air of whole and innocent goodness of life. Some time in the afternoon, the rancher discovered a couple making love in his sauna. This blew his cool, and he ordered everyone off the property. Still somewhat stoned, they wandered about the area looking for a way to get something to eat. Behind the hill where the party had been the setting sun glared red, like an angel barring the gates of Eden with a fiery sword. But nobody thought to blame it on the snake.

* * *

There is an open-air stage in a courtyard at the Cannery shopping area in San Francisco, and almost always live musicians. At Crivello's Oyster Bar you can get a shrimp sandwich on good French bread, and a beer, and sit outdoors and listen to the music while you eat your lunch.

* * *

Almost everybody who's into personal-growth programs in the Bay area—bioenergetics, encounter, retreats with Swami Mukhtananda or the Tibetan Lama Tarthang Tulku, psychic massage, or whatever—has hostile things to say about Werner Erhard and his *est* programs. Almost everybody except those who have participated in his programs. I have not, but a number of my friends have, and they find it helpful. They include people who have substantial records of their own in psychotherapy and psychiatric research, and not just gullible converts.

est costs $250. It involves two long, intensive weekends, plus midweek evening seminars beforehand, in the middle, and afterward. As near as I can make out, the program is designed to oppress participants with all the arbi-

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A Special Poetry Supplement

and Our Own (sigh!) Bicentennial Number, featuring work by Mark Twain, Henry James, Woodrow Wilson, Andrew Carnegie, and other newcomers

trary and bureaucratic bullshit, all the exploitation of our self-deceptions and clichés, by which we are characteristically victimized. The difference is that *est* does it openly and makes its participants conscious of the fact that they make their own traps and catch themselves in them. The awful realization that this miserable life is exactly what we have chosen it to be is apparently followed by a profound reconciliation with it and a renewed capacity to transcend the traps. If it does, indeed, do that, I should think it worth it.

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A scholarly, academic anthropologist lectured on shamanism at Esalen Institute a while ago. His explanation of the shaman making rain was expressed in the form, "If you want to make rain here's what you do. . . . Everybody stand up, and let's try it a minute. We won't really do it, but just get the feel of it." A visiting psychiatrist from Michigan was later overheard protesting to the program's director. "I really feel there are moral and ethical objections to teaching people that they can make rain."

I don't know how he felt, if he was still there, a few hours later when the learned professor danced and chanted, shaking a rattle, over an upset seminar member, then stooped over her, sucking in through a small tube, and spun away retching as though his mouth were full of deadly poison. I do know, though, that after a twenty-minute session she said she felt much better.

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Jean Houston works in New York. But all my contacts with her have been in California, and she seems at home in the company of those I've been describing. An early LSD researcher, she turned to other methods of altering consciousness when LSD was outlawed. She uses sensory overload and deprivation, dreams, fantasy, hypnotism, ritual, and other non-chemical techniques.

One of her specialties is time-distortion. She once told a subject in a trance that in a half-hour of clock time the subject would experience a full-semester advanced drawing class. The subject, an indifferent art student to that point, finished her half-hour session with the skills, in both design and execution, that would be expected from a highly-successful semester.

* * *

Another New Yorker who seems in-

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tellectually more at home on the West Coast (and, indeed, is more highly regarded there) is the mythologist Joseph Campbell. Campbell has retired, after many years of teaching at Sarah Lawrence College, but he looks to be in his mid-fifities. In a week at Esalen this summer, he lectured, with many slides, on Jung's psychology, on the symbolism of the Tarot pack, on Kundalini Yoga, on the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and on the rudiments of ritual in primate behavior. His fund of materials (and of slides) seems inexhaustible. He converts the potentially-dry medium of the slide lecture into a participatory process in which the sub-rational, symbolizing aspects of the listener's consciousness are engaged by the slides and somehow the lecture turns out to be about oneself rather than some alien system of ideas.

* * *

Esalen Institute itself has so many trips going in so many directions it would run a constant risk of losing touch with the world altogether if it weren't so well grounded. Perched on a ledge a hundred feet above the rocky Pacific surf of Big Sur, a thousand feet below the top of the slope on which it is set, it makes contact with the physical earth and the opening up of sensory awareness a constant pleasure. Even the fog is beautiful. Whale, seal, sea otters, hawks, eucalyptus and redwood trees, a profusion of flowers in bloom, make our roots in this earth and our kinship with all life a celebration.

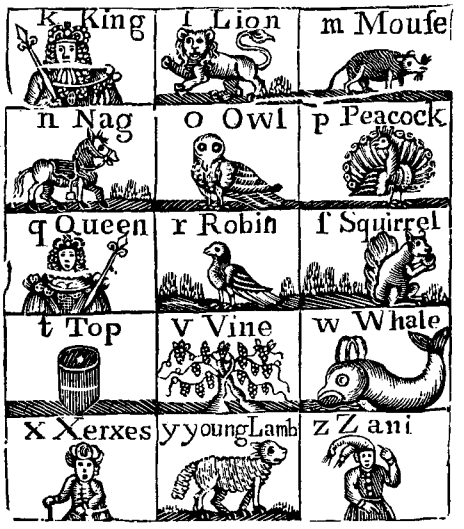
Esalen is named for an Indian tribe that used to frequent the hot springs. The spring water is now channeled into the famous Esalen baths—four seven-foot-square concrete tubs in which to soak up the slightly sulfurous warmth in the company of whoever else is there. At the entrance are faded signs reading, "Men" and "Women." "Men" indicates the side with hotter tubs, and "Women" the quieter area for meditation. Apparently left over from the remote past, the signs have otherwise no relevance to who goes where. Mixed nude bathing can be a cheap erotic thrill if you want one, but it tends, instead, to be a relaxed, pleasant sociability, in which the bathers can openly appreciate each other without making a sexual big deal out of it.

This is even more true of massage at Esalen. "Nude massage by the opposite sex" is a horrifying perversion to the Des Moines City Council (and, indeed, in Des Moines it may be a euphemism for something else). At Esalen it is massage by superbly skilled professionals who spend an hour and a half giving relaxation and pleasure to the whole body, and apparently enjoying it very much. It's such a good experience, just as a massage, that it doesn't need anything else.

Sex is something people do at Esalen when they want sex. The baths are something they do when they want, more or less sociably, to soak in hot water. Massage is something they do when they want a massage. There's something tremendously simple and healthy about that which gets lost in all the complicated indirections of Midwestern morality and Midwestern immorality.

* * *

I never found out why an association of women air traffic controllers chose for an after-dinner program a lecture and films on psychic surgery in the Philippines. I did find out that it was happening, and found the restaurant in suburban Daly City in time to watch and listen. Don Westerbeke is a businessman trained in science and engineering, and his condition, diagnosed as a pituitary tumor, had been arrested for two years



after his experience in the Philippines. He recounts his observations conservatively and often skeptically. His films covering his own and a number of other cases are of poor quality, and he acknowledges their weakness as evidence. There is no trace of either dishonesty or gullibility in his attitude.

The films show a young Filipino without medical training, operating (or whatever it is) without instruments or sterilization. He swabs the area with a clear liquid, and works on the skin with a sort of local massage. Suddenly blood appears and he seems to reach into an opening in the body and bring out a handful of tissue. He wipes his hand across the area and all evidence of an opening disappears. The blood is wiped away and the operation is over. Many, but not all, patients show dramatic improvement.

Westerbeke is not convinced there is an actual opening in the body, but he is convinced that there is no sleight-of-hand involved. That seems to imply that the alternative to a real opening of the body is some kind of materialization, which doesn't improve matters much from the orthodox medical viewpoint.

In one case a woman healer appeared to take from the throat of a patient a full-grown green potato vine. Asked if she really took it from his throat, she replied, "Of course not. That's just to create belief." But she denies any control over it; she made the motions and that's what appeared in her hand. Personally, I think the most likely explanation is that these people are highly-skilled manipulators of appearance, but that, working in a deeply-religious context, they feel no dishonesty or deception. Indeed, it is likely that they operate in a sufficiently trance-like state so that they do not, in fact, consciously manipulate the process. This leaves us without having to believe that people can be cured by bare-hand surgery, but having to believe they can be cured by the illusion of it. Western medicine uses the word "psychosomatic" carelessly, but I really don't think it constitutes an explanation. The miracle is the healing, not the method.

* * *

Al Huang was billed as a Tai Chi master and dance performer. He appeared, barefoot young Oriental with a wooden flute, a sort of real-life model for Kane in Kung Fu. Without a word, he smiled and began to walk out across the lawn, playing the flute. The group quietly followed. After a bit, he stopped, and said only, "Just let your body move, any way it wants to." As we rocked or gestured or slowly stepped across the grass, Al moved about, straightening a neck here, getting a knee to bend there, dancing briefly with another, mirroring and somehow reflecting back grace to our movement. The essence of Tai Chi, he explained later, is not the performance of certain forms and patterns, but a centered, balanced flowing that comes out of one's own body and has a style unique to oneself.

That evening we danced. Not an ordinary dance, though. Al would bring us into a circle, and we would sway, and he would begin to move out of the circle into a dance movement based on our rhythm. Or perhaps he would feel a pulse, and

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begin to voice it, and the drummer would pick it up as his beat. The drummer, too, was an active part of the process. He would watch us move, and key the drumbeat to our movement as though he were accompanying a professional dancer. As in the morning on the lawn, it was the rhythm of our own movement that gave shape to what we were doing.

No performance, no critical interruption, no right and wrong. Just an increasingly deepening discovery of the center of movement and rhythm in our own bodies. The emotional power and the scope of self-discovery this process can evoke has to be danced to be believed.

* * *

One out of the incredible diversity of inhabitants of the Big Sur coast is Stanislav Grof. As a research psychiatrist in his native Prague, Stan Grof supervised several thousand psychiatric LSD sessions in the 1950s and 1960s. Contrary to what we are reading in the American press this summer, he found it an incredibly powerful tool for both the understanding and the therapy of psychiatric disorders. After continuing his research in Maryland from 1967 to 1973, he moved to Big Sur, where he and Joan Halifax-Grof, a cultural anthropologist, are writing up their researches as well as conducting seminars at Esalen.

LSD sessions, Grof finds, involve four levels of material. The first is the familiar psychedelic distortion of perception: brightening of colors, deforming of shapes, colorful patterns with closed eyes. The second level consists of standard psychoanalytic material related to neuroses, childhood traumas, and the like. This level is full of standard Freudian symbolism. But it is beyond this point that LSD moves psychiatric research into new areas.

The third level, which Grof calls "perinatal," involves material related to the agony and struggle of birth, and to the expectation and fear of death. Its symbol-systems deal with paradise and fall, hell and nothingness, titanic struggle, death and resurrection, and rebirth and total transformation. The culminating experience of this level is one of actual death and annihilation, followed by a miracle of rebirth or resurrection. This crisis has profound therapeutic importance, while terror at its approach plays a key role not only in bad trips but in major psychiatric disturbances generally.

The fourth level involves mystical, archetypal and transpersonal experiences whose origins are totally obscure. It is clear that their symbol-processes are not Freudian and not perinatal, and equally clear that they can have great therapeutic value. But the processes by which they work are not understood.

American attitudes toward LSD make it nearly impossible for Grof to continue this sort of research. He hopes that through his book, *Realms of the Human Unconscious* (Viking, $15), and other writing and teaching, he may contribute to a change in those attitudes.

* * *

Before moving to Iowa, I grew up near the New England coast. I still find it hard to accept that the sun sets on the ocean. —*David Crownfield*

2. NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

We were on a sentimental journey back to the bizarre seashore city in which I grew up: me, my wife, my sons nine and seven. It was one of those languid indulgences we all permit ourselves sooner or later. Sooner or later we all return, and I had been away a long time. Now we were walking on Connecticut Avenue near the Boardwalk, and my nine-year-old said, "If you land on Connecticut (the light blue properties) without any houses on it, it costs you six dollars."

But I was walking on Connecticut now, and there were no houses on it anymore, and it was costing me plenty.

All the houses had been torn down between Virginia Avenue (the purple) to the south and Atlantic Avenue (the yellow) to the west and between the ocean east and north. Already the area had been razed more completely, more *exactly*, than anything I had ever seen except for the pictures of Tokyo after the rubble of the bombing raids had been swept away. Here, at the corner of Connecticut and Pacific (the green), I could see unobstructedly across all the former blocks in whose streets, alleys, and houses I had warmly grown up. If I couldn't go home again, it was because there was no longer any home to go to, no place.

Here and there upon the wide, flat, tightly packed-down plain, yellow and red fire hydrants poked up like extraterrestrial plants, a sign that eventually building would start again, a community would arise—stores, tall apartment houses, schools, people: clean, bright, new.

Nothing of it would belong to me. I would be, was already, a stranger in the land of my birth. The ghetto I was reared in was gone. So was some of my past. Some of my roots had been cut along with the trees; some of me had gone down with the three-story gray, salt-stained wooden buildings with their communal back porches and the rickety scaffolding of stairs that we had rattled up and down a dozen times in a summer day.

But sentimentality quite aside, I did feel lessened, lightly dispossessed, less strong or certain in the present without my old, primal mooring allegiances. To what place, after all, had I any longer to be loyal? When I pointed to the empty space where I had lived half my life, had learned my love and my alphabet, the clarinet and how to hit an inside pitch; when I stood *right there* on the spot of my first fight (mostly a long-distance growling stand-off) or pointed to the bakery whose warm rye bread even now in my deeper dreams I taste, what were my sons supposed to *see*? How would they ever know that there was more to me than what they were looking at now? How could *I* know? Alerted now to loss, I sought for more of what had been. Just how little of part of me did remain?

* * *

The next day I started with my old grammar school. I hadn't been back to it, *inside* of it, in thirty years. I had seen it, of course, from the outside as I grew up, and even after my father made some money and we moved away from that part of the city, I would from time to time drive by the school while destined elsewhere. But now I was encountering the building again on its original terms, and my surprise was typical, even as I had heard from others who had done this that it would be. How small it all seemed now! Particularly the auditorium upon whose wide stage I had acted in my first plays, performed in my first concerts before the vast, frightening audience. Except that as we all know now the stage was hardly more than a sturdy platform, the audience maybe twice a good-sized room. It was like being Alice: the years were my looking-glass, my potent elixir.

The auditorium was unchanged. The

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flag was updated to fifty states and the old wooden-framed clock that would leap with a snap from one minute to the next had been exhanged for a smooth, continuous flowing round-face model, arabic numerals replacing the elegant roman. But for the rest it was strictly period piece—the kind of auditorium they built in the kind of school they built in the 1920s: the cast-iron scrolled framework for the hard, molded wood backs and seats; the direct lighting; the awkward sightlines for children; the sepia and gray etchings in the unalterable niches along the walls; the same water and soda fire extinguishers, a silvery white now gleaming through more than thirty years of polished brass; the entrances and exits too small for today. But what portals they had been! What entrances to wonder! The WPA orchestra, the professional puppet presentations, magicians, the rarely shown film.

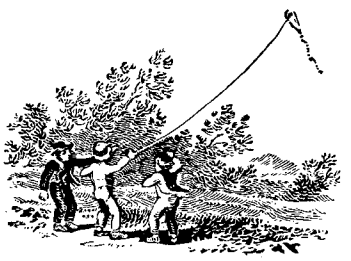
I wandered through the rest of the school, the four floors of it, tugging my family after me, noting the changes, which were unexpectedly few. I found all the rooms I had sat in up through the sixth grade. All the clocks were now like the smooth modern one in the auditorium, and in each room there was an intercom system that looked as though it really worked. And there were television sets. But mostly the rooms were the same: the chalk-stained blackboards, the wainscoated supply-closet door, the bulky heating duct and blower—all those things that had day-dreamingly wrested my attention away from my scholarly purpose were still around.

I had no trouble here. And my sons howled in manic glee as I squeezed into my old third grade desk or showed them the piano I had been put behind as punishment for kissing Marylyn Zatlin in the schoolyard during recess.

I don't know why I did that, kiss her. I mean I don't remember liking her particularly or anything like that. All I remember is doing it and her telling Miss Bloom, and Miss Bloom, before sending me behind the piano, making me stand up on my desk seat and ordering the rest of the class to chant at me, "Barry is a kissing bug, Barry is a kissing bug." I did not understand so much of that that day, only that it was wonderful. I didn't feel at all bad or embarrassed. I felt what I would now call adored. And magnificent. Behind the piano I had scratched my initials like a triumph. They were still there, darkened and smoothed but evident: "Not marble nor the gilded monuments of princes. . ."

What had changed was the function of the school. Although it was summer, school was going on—some form of specialized education for the culturally and socially disadvantaged: *i.e.*, the Negro and Puerto Rican children. This end of the city, that of it which hadn't been torn down, was increasingly Black and Puerto Rican where once it had been mainly Jewish. Before we left the school we encountered the principal, a vigorous young man in rolled-up shirt sleeves who was maybe more than ten years younger than I. (I am always momentarily surprised when I discover nowdays that teachers are often younger than I, or when I think that even Miss Bloom must have been young that day, even if old to my nine years.)

I told the principal my little history with his school and he told me about what it was doing now: how many more social responsibilities the school had assumed—hot lunches, medical examinations, numerous catch-up and enrichment programs, specialized reading clinics, speech therapy and more. I told him about when it would unexpectedly



rain during a school day, how the hall would be awash with anxious, sodden Jewish mothers who had come with galoshes for their fragile children.

He asked me if I remembered Miss O'Brien, the secretary in his office. I was startled because I *did* remember her. She was still at work. For forty years. Next year would be her last. Would I like to say hello to her? She was somewhere in the building now, but he could find her quickly.

I met Miss O'Brien thirty-six years ago. (I never knew her first name; school people do not have first names to the young). I remember meeting her because she knew me, or of me, already when I went to the office on some errand for the teacher (the old intercom system did *not* work). I had been preceded to the school by brothers and cousins. When I told her my name she placed me by them. I remember she was thin, very pale and smooth, a soft, gently moving person with octagonal rimless glasses and tightly curled short hair. Her eyes were a pale blue. She always wore white fluffy blouses with frilly cuffs. And had for forty years, and would, even now, be wearing such a blouse, I was certain. I remembered her more sharply than I remember the faces of a week ago. The faces of all those early teachers are still sharp to me. I remembered Miss O'Brien too clearly from thirty years ago to dare it now.

No, I told the young principal. Thank you. And we left. But me, I fled.

We left the car where it was and walked the four blocks from the school to where I had been born and reared on Oriental Avenue. There is indeed such an avenue, and half of it was still intact, though not my apartment house.

We wandered about, me chattering on in a parody of a guided tour through Manhattan or Beverly Hills pointing out where my Aunt Molly had lived, where Arnold Bluth had broken his nose, where Martin Luber and Seymour Cohen would hide to smoke forbidden cigarettes. All the buildings, those that were left, were paint-flaked and more *loosened* than I could remember them, and everywhere the brickwork needed pointing. Occasionally a broken window was boarded up instead of repaired. And the street surfaces were cracked and frequently buckled; it would be hard going to roller skate on them now.

I did not see children. This was July and I saw no children or young mothers pushing baby carriages or strollers. I saw no vendors with carts and cutaway trucks and cars loudly hawking fresh fish, vegetables, clothing, water ices, penny candy and toys. I did not see the multitudes that spilled out of the cauldron of summertime Philadelphia. Where were they, those week-long husbandless families that would come to camp like gypsies in the basement-converted apartments through July and August and share the world with three other families (two burners on the stove, one shelf in the refrigerator, bathroom "hours", laundry days)? Where were those families who came to inject their more daring children like an exotic and sophisticated strain into the whorl of our games of the street and into our imaginations? I saw nothing of any of this, only the slow heat and brightness on the near-empty seaside streets, surreal as a di Chirico painting.

I did not recognize, even vaguely, any of the few people, invariably old people, I did see. It felt to me as if an entire civilization had bundled itself together and left taking everything of itself along with it, leaving not a rack behind.

Not everything. I turned on to Vermont Avenue and the corner grocery was

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still there, though much altered. My sons cheered and called for Cokes. For them this reminiscence had turned into a dry business, and I, I too was dusty.

The grocery store held for me little spasmic bursts like the synaptic stirrings of memory when musty yellowing photographs fall out of the attic-buried box.

There was Myron, paunchy, graying, nearly thirty years away from the days when we would torment him with our petty larceny and the casual, impersonal destructiveness so easy to the young. We—perhaps six of us—hot and steaming, would clump anarchically into the store (hardly more than a large room then) after street hockey or kick-the-can or touch football and go to the ice chest for sodas. There were no glossy glass-doored refrigerators then, only the bright-red Coca-Cola case that held a squared galvanized tub with its bottles mostly submerged in cold, ice-floed water. The case had two doors, the left opened onto the quarts, the right onto the individual-sized bottles. Underneath, a bucket filled slowly from the thin overflow pipe. Most of the time you would have to dip your hand in and feel around for your bottle—Coke, 7-Up, Pepsi (twelve ounces then), Hires, Bierly's. Each brand had its own glass-molded characteristics, and you could tell at once what you were touching—no need to read. And the drinks were colder then, teeth-chilling, head-numbing, headache-making cold, much colder than the thermostatically controlled refrigerators of today allow sodas to get. Ice was cheaper than electricity, so whatever sodas waited in that little arctic sea went about their business of getting cold unchecked and unimpeded. More than once there was icy slush in my drink.

From the fluorescent grandeur of choice and array my wife extracted and popped two smooth cans of a local brand grape for my sons. After the second hiss of escaping gas, I nearly waited for Myron to charge at us, violent with suspicion.

Myron had been a screamer, a shrieker, but not without cause. While we would crowd about the soda case, threatening to drink twice for the price of once, Billy, who actually alone among us had the daring, would move to the unguarded check-out counter, grab candy and sometimes cigarettes, and be gone. I do not remember us ever entering that tiny store as a group without a ruckus of some kind. And occasionally Myron would exasperatingly ban us for a few days. But everything—anything—always blew over, and finally we all blew away to our far corners.

Nothing happened now, of course; now I was full of years, and respectable.

The store had changed in all the ways that those kinds of stores have changed over thirty years. That is, the corner groceries that survive the supermarkets, survive by mirroring them in miniature (though not in glamour). Where once stores like Myron's had been strictly convenience affairs (last minute salt, forgotten toilet paper) now, what with frozen foods, you could put together an elaborate, if not gourmet.

Myron's, to be sure, reflected the more limited palette of his neighborhood, and it, like the neighborhood, having risen since my time, was now descending. Whatever merchant's pride Myron must have felt as first one wall and then the next came down to meet the good years, he had given up on. One of his cases was empty and dark. All over the store bulbs needed replacing. It felt as if some goods had been there for years, souvenirs from a faded era of greater expectations and pretensions—the labels on the cans remembering for us the graphic styles of visual tastes past. And even his stock of numerous more necessary items was yet often only one rack thin. Still, the store was all a cluttered and elaborate cornucopia compared to itself when I first knew it.

I determined to talk to Myron, to ask him if he remembered me, the others, or even himself from that time—*my* time. I left my guzzling sons and turned around the island of pretzels and potato chips and all the other newer species of such things which had sprung to Being as national eating habits have shifted from the lean to the playful.

Behind the check-out counter (much longer now, with a mechanical device for pulling the items toward the checker, the cigarettes further back and up and out of anyone's reach, the candy gone altogether except for some coughdrops) sitting on a low chair back from the register itself was Myron's grandmother. I had not seen her there, small and huddled when I came in.

"Yes sir?" Myron asked. But I beheld her—shaken, thrilled, frightened a little, I cannot say exactly. The old woman must have been ninety, quite likely even more. Even years ago she was old in that total and unimagined way people are thought old by the very young. The store had actually been hers; perhaps it still was. As far as I knew she had reared Myron, for I never saw or heard of his mother or father. He had two sisters and an older brother and they had all lived together in the house on top of the store.

I remember his grandmother as a tough, bossy, but not ungentle woman, compact and strong. I remember her lifting milk cases—thick wood and metal things with the heavy glass bottles clinking and ringing—and marveling because none of us, not even Billy, could do such a thing. And now I thought I remembered her vigor, how she was always more quick, alert, *active* than Myron. How it was *she* who would catch us and dominate us as Myron never could. Standing before her now I clearly remember her pricking at Myron: "Gey! Gey!"

Now she was old in all the traditional ways: shrunken in and wrinkled upon her core, her eyes glazed with the uncontrollable rheums of agedness, her bottom lip slightly drooped. Did she see or hear or think any longer? I looked at her, I could not tell if eagerly or appalled.

"Sir?" Myron asked, louder, demanding. I would have remembered that arching tone in my most distant and deepest memories.

"Do you remember me?" I gave him my name. "I used to live three blocks down from here." I told him where. I told him when.

"No," he said. "It's been a long time."

I thought he said it too quickly. He wasn't trying hard enough. I started to recall my past to him, the sodas, Billy swiping the cigarettes, some other names and neighborhood events.

"No," he insisted. I wouldn't accept it.

"How far back do you remember? What's the cut-off date?" My belligerence surprised me, but if I had lost the buildings of my youth, I suppose I didn't want to lose the last people—the last person—too. And I suppose that, having remembered him so well, I felt he should have remembered me at least a little. But of course I had only him to remember, and he would have had so many. And anyway, he had stayed here, so what was I, what *could* I have been, to him?

"Sorry," he said. "That was a long time. Things have changed a lot." My wife and sons came up, the elder with a box of chocolate chip cookies, the younger beseeching for another soda.

"I remember," the old woman said. We looked at her. "I remember," she repeated. But that was all she said. I could not get myself to ask her more. What else was there to ask her? She had remembered me, and that was all.

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"Eighty-nine cents," Myron said. I paid and we left, I forever.

* * *

Back in the car even the cookies would not buy them off. It was hot in the way cars in summer get hot and stay hot even when you are moving. The sons were in near rebellion waiting only for their mother, and she was wavering; but having ventured this far, I could not go back simply, only further in until I circled around and broke through into the present out of which I had dangerously stepped that morning. But I would go faster now, swinging myself into a momentum to break free.

I drove past Altman Field upon whose softball diamond our enormously complicated community leagues of children, youths, fathers had been formed, the playing field of Eton from which we all went forth to Waterloo. Its orange gravel, full of irregular pebbles for grounders to take bad hops from, was paved over now into an unlikely urban desert of concrete, oddly and abruptly stopped by the easy and vital sand of the bordering beach and the ocean shortly beyond it.

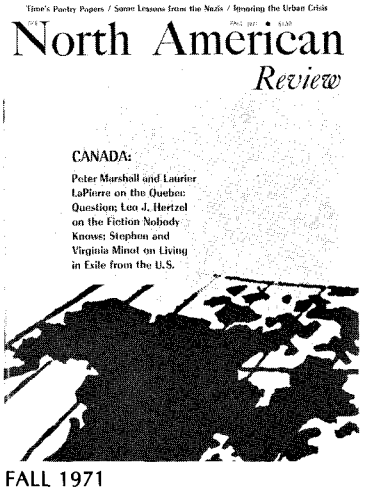
We were speeding now, past Carson's Triangle Inn down near the docks where in the lonely mid-February on late Saturday nights we came to drink our first illegal beers, past those inexplicable seaside gathering places where knots of urgent boys leaned and whinneyed upon and around the knots of wiser girls in the summer nights of the young, past all the stores I had done my mother's errands to, the houses (still there or often gone) of friends who are etched into me as only those first friends in our lives can be.

At last I turned the car on to Atlantic Avenue and headed south toward Ventnor and Margate where my motel waited on streets raised out of the dunes and starved sand grasses of long ago. It had all been like kicking around in the cold, cindery ruins after a fire, lifting with your boot toe a piece of an old toy, a chunk of a dish. But the friction of the years had worn it all away—places, event, memory itself—until all that was left, or *could* be left, was now. Driving up the broad avenue I felt following hard behind me the second hand of a gigantic clock sweeping over the terrain of our lives, sweeping it all clean and blank (like the vacant plain of my youth), crowding us forward—a tick at a time, an inch at a time—into the ever diminishing margin left.

—Barry Targan

ONCE FINE, ALWAYS FINE

The fiction, poems, and articles of *The North American Review* don't wear out with the passage of time; if there are issues you've missed during the past six years, most of them are still available for $1.50 each, and we'll pay the postage in exchange for the courtesy of your prepayment. On the form below, circle the issues you want and enclose your check; some are in short supply, so perhaps you ought not to dawdle.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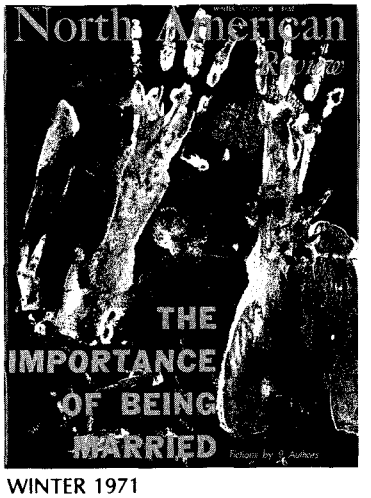
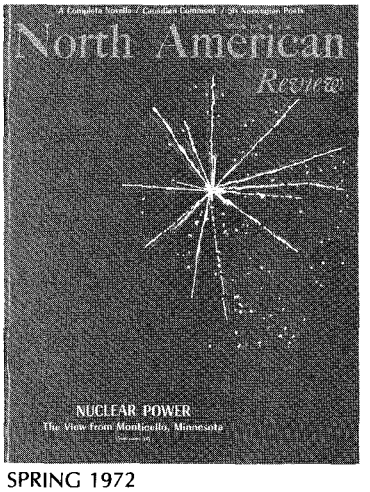
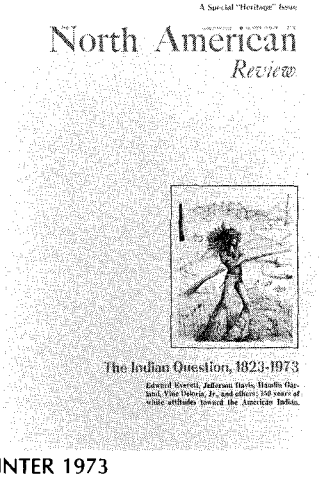
CANADA:
Peter Marshall and Laurier LaPierre on the Quebec Question; Leo J. Hertzel on the Fiction Nobody Knows; Stephen and Virginia Minot on Living in Exile from the U.S.
FALL 1971



WINTER 1971



SPRING 1972



WINTER 1973

The North American Review
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

Here is my check for $ _____ in payment for the back issues circled below at $1.50 each.

1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
—	Spring	Spring	Spring	Spring	—
Summer	Summer	Summer	Summer	Summer	Summer
Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	Fall	—
Winter	Winter	Winter	—	Winter	Winter

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

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Kenneth Lash

Isolation and Information

Did you know: that one of the Wright brothers was left-handed? Failure to take this correctly into account limited the steering responsiveness of their airplane, and to some extent undermined their mutual confidence as brothers.

* * *

Dept. of Utter Wisdom: my friend Billie, on hearing of the death of my remarkable Puli: "It is a lot easier when you lose a dog than a friend even if you actually like the dog more."

* * *

"There will be singing and black cries of exultation and Portugese tears as Portugal's flag is hauled down, and Frelimo's green, white, yellow, red and black flag is hoisted." (Milwaukee *Journal*).

Reports filter down that orange was voted out 17-6, and chartreuse was killed in committee

* * *

Up-dating "Money Has Gone Crazy": "Pechman, Okun, Nathan and others . . . are concerned about inflation from a different aspect: they believe that the savagery of the recession and the subsequent drop in demand should have forced a sharper slowdown in the rate of price increases than has, in fact, occurred. Businessmen, they suspect, are refusing to cut prices partly because they do not think that price cuts expand sales in a modern economy—even though they are supposed to by all traditional free-market precepts." (*Time*, 5/26/75.)

* * *

A student told me he read that a gorilla at Stanford University has learned 170 words. "Of course," he said, "Stanford's a pretty good school. . . ."

* * *

The current cocktail-party political poll editorial page question is this: Is the United States—frustrated, broke, and unappreciated—going to become isolationist?

That is not a true question. It is a comfortable one. It says the choice is ours. The world facts of 1975 say otherwise. The immediate choice is not ours, but that of the majority of the world.

The real question is this: Will most of the world choose in the coming decade to isolate the United States?

There is every possibility that it will. We have many enemies, which is bad enough but not nearly so significant as the fact that we have too few friends. Too few, perhaps, even to allow us to remain in the United Nations. What have we any longer to offer that is unique? Russian

weapons, Japanese production techniques, West German stability—they're all as good as ours, and the Mexican dollar is better.

For two hundred years we had the world's most attractive and powerful export—a visionary ideology. We no longer have it. Our version of democracy is not any longer exportable. It doesn't fit either the needs or possibilities of developing nations. Democracy requires too much time, too many resources, too much capacity to absorb mistakes for it to be a practical mode of government for new or changing nations in this quick and ruthless time. National survival requires instantly sophisticated management techniques at the top, directing a unified group effort toward rapid self-development. This seems to be the new ideology, the contemporary groundswell. It might be called communalism.

Not, for the love of bugaboos, communism. *Communalism*. Which has no single attitude toward the profit motive except to keep the profits at home. Appearing with all the suddenness of new national freedoms, communalism is taking a variety of shapes and forms, but its essential ideology is consistently the primacy of national purpose at the expense of pluralistic politics and of individual expression. Most of Asia, much of Africa, Latin America, now India, now parts of Europe via Portugal, possibly Italy soon, are involved in this current wave of revolution.

Oddly enough, a potentially more profound social revolution may be occurring in the United States. Ironically it is here—not in Russia, it seems—that an egalitarianism unknown since tribal societies is attempting to surface. Tremendous strides toward egalitarianism are being taken in this country, and at the fundamental level of person rather than politics. The United States is afloat toward psychological democracy.

But it's a dangerous trip. First because instead of mere kings it is meritocracy itself that gets left behind. All kinds of standards and values get left behind. Assuming that new, more viable ones are to be discovered, this is healthy psychologically, but until these new values are found and adhered to, until egalitarianism can move beyond simply more and more individualism, it is socially destructive and politically very slippery, hard to hold together. It is, in its early stages, a form of isolationism. The mod words of five years ago were descriptive: identity crisis, alienation, my own thing . . . but also, togetherness, getting it together. A belief that the self found and freed, joins, wants to join, of its own free will, out of its own need for others.

All of this is happening underneath the more visible surface of important but outworn images of American "indi-

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vidualism" and "freedom"—images so outworn that we can't even muster a decent party for them on their two-hundredth birthday. These old descriptions appear to us as sheer Disney, but the vacuum of national ideals is a real-life peril. Self-centeredness is defended as liberty, strong leaders are neither elected nor followed; pitiable *affaires de Mayaguez* pass as strength, grotesquely sentimental orphan-shuffling passes as feeling.

We are found to be in a peculiar position in regard to world events, to history in its forming: "behind" politically, if varied forms of communalism are as seems likely the dominating pattern of 21st-century political organization; "ahead" psychologically, if freeing of the *inner* person is the next major step in a civilizing process.

So the question is not one of the United States reverting to isolationism. There's no reverting about it. The question is—given the "movement away" by most other countries, and the "movement within" by many of our people—can the United States 1) admit openly that its choices in regard to isolationism are limited, 2) act affirmatively within the limits—that is, join where possible, abstain where impossible, and let the rest alone while we do our thing. Our thing may well be 21st-century pioneering.

* * *

Travels with Abraham:

¶ Alewives—those I speak of here—are a salt-water fish that prefer to do their spawning in fresh water. Evidently they are good at it, since they exist in the millions of tons. But—strong heart, faint brain. Perhaps in some form of post-egg drop euphoria, many tons of them forget that home is the drab sea, and continue on, further, into the happy spawning grounds—the St. Lawrence seaway, for instance, ending up in the Great Lakes, where by mid-June they are floating belly-up, unsmiling, in Lake Michigan, along the shores of Door County, a peninsula of cherry trees, golf courses, and sailboats.

¶ As evidenced in housing, the Canadian esthetic sense is not so much weak as non-existent. Rural Belgium may compete in phantasmal ugliness of house, but not in utter consistency. The leaf goes to Canada, with special mention to the province of Quebec which features three major motifs of Canadian architecture: 1) the wooden square nailed over with a composition coating of false brick in pastel colors, often turquoise and pink, like the upholstery of a 1967 Toyota station wagon, 2) the cinder or cement block oblong, favored for restaurants and taverns, set behind a Swiss-cheese stretch of "carved" wood. Detached elegance. 3) Mass-produced "inlaid" doors, often vermilion or antique white with gold. These appear on all types of structure, regardless of other considerations. If it is a motel, however, and the motel is Evelyn's, the doors will sport a wooden E in script. True consistency is achieved by the fact that the older houses are as forbiddingly dreary as the new. Canada may be the only country where the advent of the mobile home represents an architectural advance.

¶ Two minutes across the border into Canada and the smell of U.S. violence and mistrust falls off. One breathes differently.

¶ No matter what your mode of transportation, avoid Chicago. A feasible driving route from the midwest to the east coast is either north via the Pole or south through New Orleans.

¶ Note from the Maine coast: Out of the lexicon with "happy as a clam." Some example of bastard man has come up with a clam dredger—huge, thorough, probably inescapable. An endangered visual pleasure: the couple with their pail and shovel out on the tidelands, happy as people digging clams. □

RONALD WALLACE

BREAKING AWAY

You know this dream.
You walk out of your house one night
wiping your family off your mouth
like a bad dinner.
Moving through the dark streets
you feel your daughter's cries
slip out of your ears and fly away,
tame as a bedtime story.
Your wife grows smaller and smaller,
her belly filled with stones.
You are free at last
and alone.

Meanwhile, the street
lifts you on its tongue.
The night grows wings.
In the distance you hear
your wife and daughter singing,
their voices reaching out for you
with long fingers.
You feel yourself slipping
but it's a long way down,
your heart blown in,
your thin smile glowing
like a bone.

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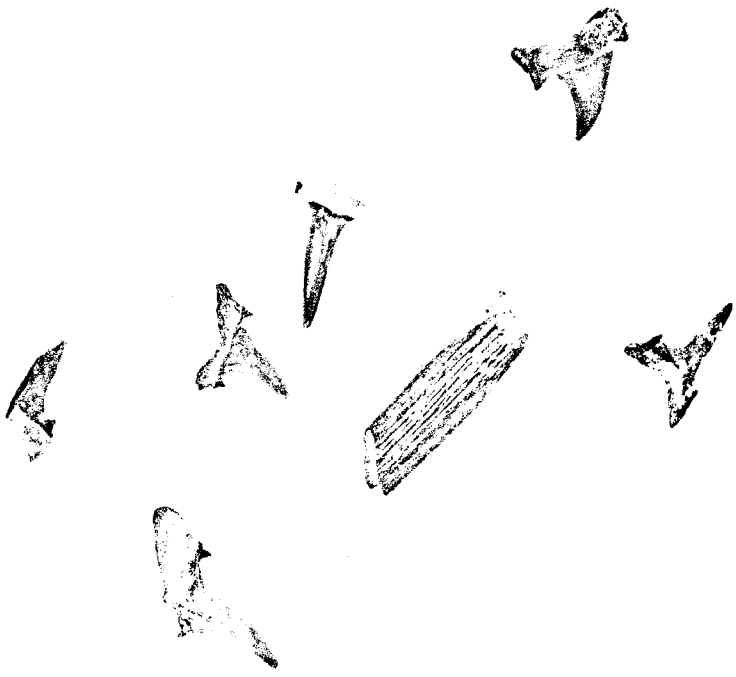

A STORY BY GEOFFREY GREEN

UNION

Softly, so softly it was:
Delicate motion in the moonbeams;
Her thin ankles, slightly above the water,
The glistening light: simply bait for slaughter.
Faint imprint of her toes in the wet sand,
Water washed away: vanishing traces
To where she stood, up-rising, growing
From dark, flowing oceans;
Thin beauty caught forever
In one perfect strand of moonlight—
Sparkling, naked ankles . . .

BOY, 9, MAULED BY SHARK, DIES ON WAY TO HOSPITAL

Onlookers horrified as tragedy occurs in only 3 feet of water

Beach Haven, N.J.—Authorities today combed the shallows in search of the 10 foot shark, thought to be a mako, which took the life of young Lester Stilman. According to witnesses, the boy was playing in the water close to shore when he was abruptly tossed in the air and dragged, apparently by his foot, into deeper water. People at the scene remarked that he appeared to be "waving at first" and "blowing kisses" at them. A few moments later a dramatic struggle began as Lester's father, Wilbur, 42, an insurance salesman, hauled the boy into 8 inches of water while the monster held on firmly to the lad's leg. In 3-inch water the shark released its grasp and swam away. But it seemed that time had run out for young Stilman, a bright, handsome youngster in Mrs. Malaby's fourth grade class at the Park Lane School . . .

As for me I will not go swimming in the water anymore. It's as simple as that. Too dangerous. Unless it's to set foot in a skiff to go and search them out and then get a little compensation, I can't see any reason to even go near the shoreline. You think you're safe on the beach? Listen: my buddy Jim Perls landed a twelve foot white on a surf rod off the Palm Beach pier. Then went and had a few Buds. Two hours later, refreshed, he tried to get the hook out—that mother chomped onto his arm. That's right! You have to be prepared.

"Villain. *Schurke*. That's what the Germans call them. I can think of a few names that might be a little less tender. The giant sloth, the sabertooth, the wooly mammoth, the Tyrannosaurus—in ages past, they all rose to supremacy and then fell away, into the drift of oblivion. Vanished from the face of the earth. Inability to cope: that was the problem. Flocks of passenger pigeons once blotted out the sun: it's the same thing. Flawless design, unlimited adaptability—that's what it takes to survive for three hundred million years. Has man been around that long? No sir.

"And you know something? There may be some of them, swimming around today, that were born millions of years ago. It's a fact. Once asked a friend of mine, marine biologist named Maury, to estimate the age of a shark I caught. 'Absolutely impossible,' the fellow said. Because unless she happens to have an accident, a shark might live forever. And how are we to know? A fish dies, leaves bones: they fossilize. But the shark's cartilage merely vanishes, disappears—only the teeth remain. Thumbing her nose at

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the whole world of science. Put some shark flesh under a microscope: you will find distinct evidence of cell regeneration—not healing, but actual reproduction of the cells. Aging won't begin unless that process is over. Perfect design, that's the gist of it.

"Seems I recollect one time in the Merchant Marine we hooked a large blue momma that was following us for days. Slit her right open. Revealed the following: assortments of partly digested garbage and small fish, two soda bottles, an aluminum soup kettle with a broken handle, a carpenter's square, plastic cigar box, screw-top jar filled with nails, a rubber raincoat, an old tennis shoe, three-foot-wide tar paper roll with twenty-seven feet on the spool, and part of a human hand. Well. Must I say that regarding that mess of nauseating rubbish, is it any wonder a shark will choose fresh meat, even human flesh? Stands to reason. At any rate, not worth the risk.

"While we sleep, while we eat, through the day or night: you can be sure they're swimming. From the instant they're born. Of course then they've got to or the fat mother will take a swipe at the babies. Other regular fish have air sacs, stabilize the balance inside and out; when they have to sleep, the eyes close and they float in the water. Shark closes her eyes, she'll sink to the bottom, sometimes for miles. All right! So they got to keep moving, can't be still, patrolling the waters of the world. And four-fifths of the earth is water. Each shark born, a perfectly equipped little devil, survival rate high, mortality rate preposterously low—hundred new ones born for each one we kill—the odds in favor of the shark are overwhelmingly impressive. But that's not all.

"A laboratory proven fact is that some sharks cease feeding when the water temperature drops below sixty-eight degrees; they either swim around or move to warmer seas. You may not be aware of this—they try to cover it up—but the waters around our United States, around the world for that matter, have suddenly grown warmer! Matter of fact, the average temperature along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts has been increasing at a rate of two degrees for each passing year since 1958. Why, the buggers never had it so good in all their three hundred million years.

"Is it any wonder, then, as the sharks journey for miles to bask in the lovely warm aqua, feasting on the picnic delights that drop in from the shoreline, that the authorities at public beaches distort and even suppress the actual data of shark attacks in the United States? If the truth were known, the beaches would be deserted. What state wants the reputation of having a shark infested shoreline? Of course not. How many reports you hear concerning folks 'lost at sea: body never recovered'? You know as well as I do the human body will always be washed ashore or found floating within a few days. But if the shark has been completely successful in the attack—completely successful—there will be no clues, no trace. Subtropical waters surrounding the United States. Generally estimated that June, July, and August are the most hazardous months. Attacks occur earlier and later but the greatest concentration of sharks in the water is correlated to the three months. This provides little solace, however. Remarkably few swimmers are willing to change their life-long customs, even in the face of scientific proof.

"Whatever else, don't swim alone. Avoid murky water at all costs. Harder to spot the mothers in the thick clouds. Don't matter to her, though: a shark hunts with the nose. But the widely prevalent myth that the shark is practically blind is absolutely false—don't believe it for a minute! It is very conceivable that the human body exudes a musk in moments of great fear or crisis and this, combined with a noisy, hysterical dash to safety, provides an engraved invitation for any shark to attack. Pliny the Elder said that the best way to demolish a shark is to swim right at her: scare her away. Well, he didn't know much, either. A shark approaches, best thing to do is start swimming away, but slowly, with deliberate strokes. Shark might think you're a big fish. Swim all the way to the shore. And keep on going. Don't go back in.

"It's downright distressing, but it seems increasingly likely that fighting off a determined shark is a hopeless proposition. But man can sometimes wrench loose from the jaws of death on sheer will alone, just old piss and vinegar."

(----------)
shoooooweeeeeooooooshoooooweeeeeooooooshoooooweeeeeoooo

(----------EMPTY----------)
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(----------FEEL EMPTY ----------LONELY ----------)
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(----------)
ooooooshoooooweeeeeooooooooshoooooweeeeeooooooshoooooowee

(---------- COLD ---- NERVOUS ----------)
eeeooooooshshshshshoooooweeeeeeooooooshoooooweeeeeooooo

(------ NEED ---------- LONELY ----------)
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(----------DAMN ---------- ALMOST BUMPED --)
ooooooshoooooweeeee!—groink/shooooooweeeeeooooooshooooow

(----------DESOLATION----------)
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(----------DARK ----------)
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(---------- TOO DARK ----------)
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(---------- BUBBLES ----------)
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(---------- EMPTY ----------)
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(----------FEEL EMPTY ----------)
eeeeeooooooshoooooweeeeeooooooshoooooweeeeeooooooshooooo

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Tingled my ear after her kiss;
Inside: the force long building surged
(Within me); on the blanket lying,
Gazing upon the etches of the sea lives past . . .
The hand that darted nearer
Jerked her up standing;
(In the dark, moist air, her whiteness thrilled me)
Heavy her hands with wet sand
O'er my body: warm weight;
The glistening sheen of her legs
As she stepped towards the water . . .

SHARK SWALLOWS MAN ALIVE

Aerodynamic Engineer Swallowed Alive By Monster Shark, While Snorkeling Close Inshore

Incident witnessed underwater by friend; fellow swimmer

San Diego, Cal. — A massive search is in progress today to locate any traces of the body of Robert Kogler, the Boeing Aircraft engineer who, according to a reliable witness, was eaten alive yesterday afternoon in LaJolla Cove, north of here. Mr. Gerald Murphy, the only witness to the attack, had gone with his friend Kogler to the cove with snorkeling equipment in order to collect abalones. The water was heavily populated with bathers. Murphy, by his own account, had been out 50 yards from shore when he turned to see Kogler "rising up out of the water" as if he had "stepped on a rock". "He was threshing his arms wildly in the water," said Murphy. Ducking his face into the water, he saw what he described as "a gigantic tiger shark, 20 feet long." Protruding from the shark's jaws was the upper half of Mr. Kogler's body. Massive amounts of blood poured into the water. "His face mask was off and his eyes were open," said Murphy, 30, also an engineer. "All he did was look upwards."

Late reports indicate that no traces of the victim have been found, despite the 6 boats, Coast Guard helicopter and 22 SCUBA divers that have been mobilized for the search . . .

Captain Huff Buckley was the greatest seafaring fisherman sailor that ever served in the Merchant Marine; don't let anyone tell you different. And I should know: it takes one to spot one. I don't think you could name a type of fishing that in some way does not give me pleasure. Try it, you'll see: sitting in the fighting chair atop a cabin cruiser, with a fast and fancy sail dancing acrobatics in the wake; paddling about the shallows in search of bonefish; casting my tiny bait across the inlet for weakfish; hand-lining croakers up from the bottom of Chesapeake Bay. I even used to enjoy rolling up my trousers and wading knee deep along the edge of the water, netting for crabs. Sensational. Every kind of fishing that's possible. For me, however, the shark is the greatest catch: their pursuit is, indeed, the noble chase.

"Durban, South Africa; Boca Grande, Florida; Biloxi, Mississippi; Ceduna, Australia; Lake Nicaragua; Nakalele Point: some of the great centers of the world for shark fishing. Been to each of them many times. Plenty of other great ports — the world is four-fifths water—but each man has his preference. Out in the Pacific, before the war broke, military man was often hard put to discover forms of amusement. Most fellows never realized that beyond the sandy stretches in the palm-fringed coves lay a world of sharks, waiting to be enjoyed. But I did. You bet. Figure I caught so many in my crazy years of knocking about from one island to another, defies human calculation. Ended up with a reputation, too. Fritz Büttner, the fat, jovial Austrian chef who bunked next to me for a while, coined my nickname: *Rächer*. Avenger. I was always coming back with one tale or another. All of them true.

"One time I happened to be stationed at Palmyra, a real tropical paradise with palm-studded dunes and lilting sea breezes. Recall sitting at a little cafe right on the lagoon in the open air. Island girls with long slit-to-the-knee dresses and emerald bracelets served drinks. A little combo lazily played at a tune, was popular back then, a thing called "Mango":

I was at a dance
When I heard it played;
With my big romance
We were in a daze;
I was drinking rum and soda water—
She was dancing every step I taught her:
She moved in such enchanting ways;
We were turning up and down around

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You should have seen me lay my money down—
When a man sang, and drove our cares away:

Just mix the rum with the Mango
Then feel it deep in your pango
You'll be doing the tango—

You get the idea. Anyway, Huff Buckley came over in the middle of the festivities—meandered his way through a crowd of dancing Japs—and sat down at my table. Well. As soon as he said 'shark' I said to count me in. There was no question about it. It seems Huff had been put in custody of four cases of hand grenades that had remained in ammunition storage for longer than the ordinance manual permitted. Normal procedure would be to load them on a light skiff and drop them off somewhere in the ocean. But Huff had been tossing a few out into the lagoon just to watch the explosions; he got an idea. Hardly. More like an inspiration.

"Friend of mine, worked in the kitchen, Jacky Whistler, showed up a little later with an entire shipment of rotten beef. I pilfered a large inflatable raft from the supply depot. Early morning found us on a deserted stretch of beach, blowing up the raft and slicing the beef into shark-sized pieces. I was itching with excitement. For some reason, Jacky kept reciting poetry; Kipling, I think it was: 'The Bastard King of England.' The supplies were all loaded on the raft. We pushed off into the lagoon, paddling quietly towards the deep. The water was still and reflected the sun. At long last we were out far enough and I began tossing the rotten beef into the water, waiting for the little whores to show up. Almost immediately we saw the first fins. Then three or four dozen, swimming feverishly in the water, blues and tigers and sand sharks. We teased them quite a bit at first, throwing out bits of scrap meat and bone. Followed that up with good chunks of meat. I'll never forget the zany scowl on Huff's face as he hurled the beef off away from the raft: 'Watch the bitches fight for it, Ben!'

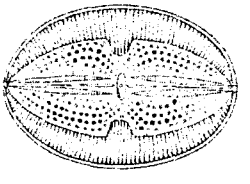
"We quickly tired of this dalliance. I, for one, was eager to move on to the important business-at-hand. I lashed a grenade onto a beef chunk with a piece of wire; then I knotted another wire to the ring. Heaving the flesh-bomb a considerable distance from the float, I watched with delicious anticipation as it sank below the surface. Big blue baby noted it, circled, and swallowed. Immediately I wrenched the wire. We deliriously counted down: five, four, three, two one, BOOM! At one instant, there was the stupid slut, swimming off contentedly. The very next second: without a head! Blasted right off. We fell, laughing with glee, to the floor of the raft. What a tremendous morning: blowing up the dirty heads of sharks with diabolical enthusiasm. I marveled as the sun rays touched the bloody water.

"But my body kept on shaking, I don't know why, it wouldn't stop: the still, clear morning shattered by the explosions, the sun on our backs, the raft spinning in the now churning water as the sharks ducked and splashed for their fateful meal: I suppose it was only natural that I would somehow, idiotically, toss out a live grenade. The dire implications were clear to us at once. A large tiger gulped it up, but instead of swimming away, the whore made straight for our raft! Paddling furiously with aluminum oars, we still did not fail to mark the countdown. The bomb went off, the little fucker's head blew up; shock wave overturned the raft. Threw the bunch of us into the bloody water with the beef and the sharks. Yes, it did!

"Can't say exactly how it was done, but we grabbed onto the oars, hot-tailed it for shore. Felt the sharp fire of shark skin rubbing against my leg. I personally got in a few royal clouts, whacked a few of them to kingdom come, treading water all the while. Wound up on shore, all three of us, panting and sweating, Waited while the raft floated in. Mission accomplished, no injuries, and a heck of a lot of fun.

"Hot damn! You can be sure I have no intention of repeating that little incident. Not on your life. Tell you what I do sometimes: punch out holes in a can of Drano and tie it onto a dead fish. Shark gulps it up and the lye eats her stomach away. Not very sporting, perhaps, but simple and effective. And few sights are as powerful and rewarding as the shark writhing on the water's surface as her stomach burns up.

"I'm convinced, mind you, that sharks and other cold-blooded animals have no sense of pain. None at all—part of the perfect design. Can't even tell you the hundreds of times I've hauled up a shark, split her open from pectoral to anal fin: deboweled the slut of stomach, liver, heart and intestines, then tossed the slimy mess overboard, only to watch her swim away, placidly feeding on her own entrails. Once Captain Dirk Whalen and myself were out on a shrimp trawler off Cedar Key, Florida. We hauled up a large hammerhead: if anyone asks you what's the ugliest creature on this earth, don't hesitate, tell him the hammerhead. Dirk really gave it to her good with brutal blows from a thick metal pipe. Kept it up for twenty minutes. Then, I couldn't resist, I shot in six bullets from a .30-.30 Winchester rifle. Split her open right then, divested her of her innards. Went back to our fishing. Later, old Dirk grabbed hold of her around the middle to toss the carcase overboard.



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And you know what? That jumpy ass flipped around, chomped into his arm. And that's no Long John Silver! Captain Whalen has but one usable appendage these days. And don't think he's pleased about it either.

"Well, we finally got the cursed bitch back in the water. Astounding thing was, about two hours later, what do you know but we hauled her up again! Blood still flowing from the bullet holes, inner glands still sagging loose: didn't hesitate a moment. Hacked at that thing with an axe for the better part of four hours. That's right—and if she was still alive, she wouldn't do nobody harm, that's for sure. Dirk, though, he wasn't satisfied. Can't say I blame him."

(----------)
shooooooweeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeoooo

(----------HARDLY ENOUGH----------)
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(---------- EMPTY ----------)
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(----------FEEL EMPTY----------)
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(---------- HOLLOW ----------)
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(----------BUCK UP----------)
eeeeooooooshooooooeeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshoooooowe

(------ LONELY ----------DEPRIVED ------)
eeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshoooooow

(----------SORROW----------)
eeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshoooooowe

(----------GET OFF S.O.B.----------)
eeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshoo!—flurpflap/shooooooweeeee

(---------- WANTS FREE RIDE ----------)
eeoooooshooooweeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooooooweee

(---------- SELFISH ----------)
eeeooooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooooo

(---------- DARK ----------NERVOUS ----------)
weeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooooooo!-eeeck/shoooooowe

(---------- EMPTY ----------)
eeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshoooooow

(---------- AH HA ----------)
eeeeeooooooshooooooweeeeeooooooshooo!—zurk/shooooooweeeee

RAFE MALONE, 45, THE 'JONAH' OF CARABELLE, KILLED BY INJURIES FROM SHARK ATTACK

Ten years before had been swallowed by a shark and then released

Legendary sponge diver dies on beach minutes after shark flees

Palm Beach, Fla. — Rafe "Jonah" Malone, the sponge diver from Carabelle, Fla., who achieved fame ten years ago as the man who escaped "the jaws of death" died today shortly after being attacked by a ten foot white shark. Mr. Malone was fully clothed and wading along the beach early this morning when his shouts attracted crowds of people. He died minutes after he was dragged from the water, presumably from loss of blood. A decade ago, off Lemon Reef near Carabelle, Malone had been sponge fishing in a diving helmet connected to an air hose. Two divers watched as a 25 foot white shark circled him, then opened its jaws and swallowed Malone. The shark had begun to swim away with Malone's air hose and life line trailing out the side of its mouth. All at once the shark began what witnesses called "a horrible contortion." The mouth opened and Malone swam out. He later described his feeling when inside the demon as ". . . scary, I felt pretty bad." He was cited as a local hero and received several civic citations.

Authorities view today's tragedy as "a hideous twist of fate". . .

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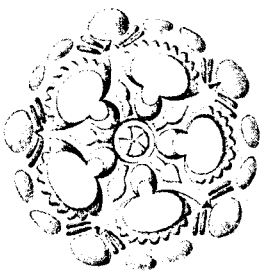

And into my dreams, beauty bless'd,
To lie, eyes adrift, in fiery sand,
Dizzy with spirited splashes of light (so light!)
Steps upon the water; My muscles taut,
The haunting, taunting ring from the sea. . .
(Had I but known the choice before me made —
Fate swerving its loathsome fin: a moment sooner,
dear God!)
The sensual laugh at the touch
(Believing, of course, I behind hastened
In marvelous silence to tap her toe —
Trusting my hand to ankle reached)
And then the shriek, the anguished moans. . .

Thank God for vitamin pills! Of course I have nothing against cod liver oil, but after the war, scientists discovered that shark's liver was needed for the newly-invented vitamins. Borden Milk Company set up large contracts with commercial fishermen to bring in as many sharks as possible. Wanted the aforementioned livers, the fins to sell in the Orient, the hides for drapes and rugs and the flesh for fertilizer. Bless us and save us! Here was the chance to receive monetary compensation for what I had been doing for years as a civic duty. Well. Must I say that the sport was already in my blood? Tossed the old sea bag aboard the first trawler out and headed for the Gulf.

"Lots of methods of hauling in the little bitches. Some used nets, others trotlines, most of them swore by baited hooks. But on my first round (on the *Leviathan* under Captain Tom Hassel) and on every brig I skippered until the whole racket ended a few years later, we used only standard sporting weapons: rifle, harpoon, bow and arrow, and, occasionally, underwater bombs.

"Used to outfit the old gasoline cans that were put on the back of the jeeps during the war. Took these 'Blitz cans' and painted them all bright orange. We'd tie a heavy steel ladder on one side and attach a bunch of rotten beef, dead sting rays, rancid fish, and God knows what else to the other side. Anything the mothers would go for. Even spilled calves' blood in the water. Irresistible. Beneath the appetizing slop would be a triggered harpoon, lashed to the meat. Little momma swims up, pounces her wicked jaws on the bait and zing! she gets it: a harpoon thrust right down her mouth.

"On one trip I recall, we were off the coast of Cuba and the boys had the Blitzes and necessary gear all set in the water. Been out several days and our stock of live ones was well above capacity. Lamont, my first mate, and I were up in the cabin arm wrestling. Another fellow was calling down the progress of the match to the men as they worked. Almost had old Lamont nailed to the desk when we heard the eager cries of the men on deck. Seems that our little beagle, Lorenzo, the ship's mascot, was scampering along the wet deck when his footing slipped and he was tossed overboard. Little guy flew right into the water, red with the beef blood. Never had a chance. Normally we could of had him out in no time. His tiny head was bobbing up in the water, legs paddling and ears flapping. Had the net nearly under him when a nasty slut hammerhead appeared behind him, one quick gobble, no delay, no circling and it was all over. Poor fellow.

"Men were pissed off. And I couldn't agree more: we decided to blow the rest of the quota. Spent the next five days rustling up the old queens and torturing the daylights out of them—just for the raw pleasure of it. Not a one of us made enough money on that jaunt, but no one complained. Matter of fact, many sailors bragged that it was a great run. The sight of Lamont, bare arms whipping a machete through the air and into the chained bodies of eight foot makos; fat blues, their plump asses dangling from the steel frames, flesh riddled with ripe arrows; and I suppose my own energetic example, leaning out over the water, waving my harpoon in the wind as we cruised through the Blitz cans picking off humping Duskies, made this a truly worthwhile excursion.

"Soon afterwards, a bunch of blackguards conned the President and the Science Commissioner and the Borden Company into believing that there was no commercial value in marketing sharks. Well. They exonerated Dreyfus and we can never tell: times change and what seems outmoded today may be revitalized tomorrow. Just around the corner there's a rainbow in the sky. Heck, when the scientists come back to proclaiming the value of hunting sharks, there will be a noble bunch of veterans waiting to ship out. Have to be a lot more sailors than before, though, to match the increased shark population.

"Meantime, I have formed, with Ernst Güttermann, the Daytona Beach Shark Society. Just a little club for the dedicated aficionados and sporting men of conscience. Tall, lively Ernst runs a hobby and toy store in the area, but as soon as business hours are over, he is out on the pier with the rest of us, angling for the foxes. There was the glorious evening when, by flashlight, I hooked a fifteen foot tiger doxy and dragged her into range. Used only a hook attached to a long, heavy length of anchor rope. Round of well-aimed shots from my .45-.70 rifle and we had her subdued. Flipped her over on her back and while the boys held her down to a plank of wood, with firm strokes I drove a stake into her. Tied a noose around the tail, doused her with gasoline, then hoisted the whole contraption out from the pier and set it aflame. Whole beach could see it

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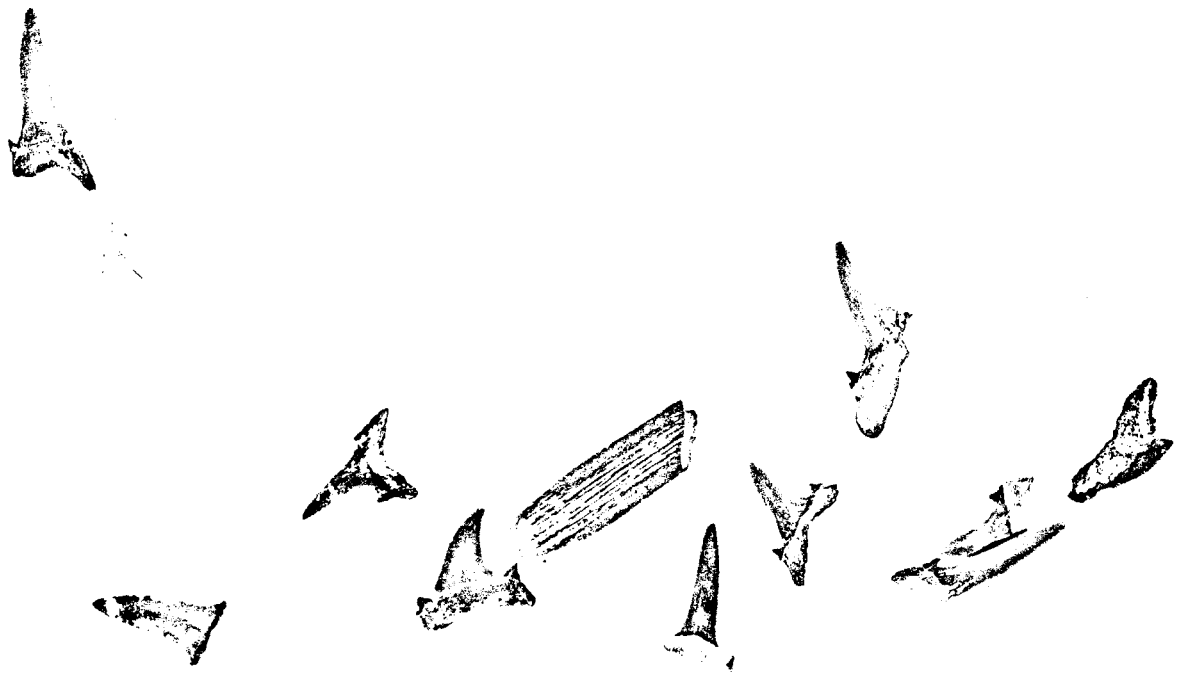

blazing in the cool night air. From miles away. Flames dancing and waving high in the air and the smoke trailing off: it was a beautiful sight; a wondrous sight.

"Ernst is still trying to discover the truth behind the encounter the D.B.S.S. had with the police. One night Ernst, using only light spinning tackle for an extra kick, pulled in a medium pointer. Only after he had her on the dock did he realize that she was dead and that two human legs were emerging from the mouth! We determined in the back of Ernst's store that death had apparently resulted from strangulation. Notified the police and they loaded the whole thing off in a hospital stretcher. Towed it away in an ambulance. Never had the decency to notify us as to the results of their inquiry. Was it a criminal, a murderer, a derelict, a cop? Perhaps we will never know. I have my theory. And it explains the rude behavior of the Daytona Beach Police Department.

"Recently, I have become convinced that mankind and sharks are at the coming of the roads. After years of brutal massacres and sickening travesties at the hands of the marauding sows, it's about time we made an effort to strip the cloak of mystery off their prissy backs. Especially now, when it seems increasingly likely that they outnumber us by hideous proportions, it is urgent for every man to rise up to the occasion. Fight to the death: that's all it is, no way else to describe it. Must say, I can't see why more people won't come to grips with the situation, but that's life: the bars and lounges and cat houses and living rooms will remain crowded and thriving. But out on the dark and lonely ocean, a godawful battle of wits is being fought, of eternal resources. And there, in the middle of that scarlet, billowing water, man will meet shark—and prevail, or perish in the struggle. God knows, it's the fate man was born for. Don't think I flinch from the challenge! The call has been sounded. With only my small boat and the simplest of harpoons, I will push out into the fateful ocean. Yes sir: that's where I'm going to be."

(----------)
shooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeoooo

(---------- EMPTY ----------)
oshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooo

(----------FEEL EMPTY ----------)
ooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeoo

(---------- VACANT ---------- LONELY ----------)
ooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeo

(---------- VOID ----------)
oooooshooooweeeeeooooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweee

(----------TIRED ----------MELANCHOLY ----------)
eeooooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooowee

(---------- HOLLOW ----------)
eeeooooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooowee

(------ DESPERATE ----------AAAAH --)
eeeooooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooooshoooo!—urp/sho

(----------PITTANCE ----------)
oooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooo

(------ EMPTY ----------)
shooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeoooo

(----------FEEL EMPTY ----------LONELY----------)
ooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeee

(---------- EMPTY ---------- EMPTY ----------)
eoooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeeeooooshooooweeeee

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It would be a fine day, perhaps, a day like all the others, a typical day. . . . In the shadows of the early morning, shortly before dawn, the old captain labored quietly on the narrow, soggy dock where his canoe was tied. The air was warm and musty, almost thick; the captain reflected that it would soon be hot. Beyond the dock he could see the long pier and the tall buildings. Above him he spotted the blurred shapes of the gulls, swooping in for their morning meal. With dull and sluggish motions, as if he were performing a ceremonial, an ancient, rite, the captain walked along the dock, carrying the cases of beer, the knife, his looking glass, fluffy towel, thin harpoon, and loaded them into his vessel. There was a dark haze above the water. He sat for a while, at the edge, and felt the flowing of the tide at his feet. Then he pushed the canoe out to sea.

He had been paddling for several hours. When at last he paused for a moment he felt the hot glare of the sun directly above him. Captain Ben Halahan slid his oar into the canoe; with a blue towel he mopped his forehead, his neck, and his chest. The captain leaned over to the case, grabbed a can of beer and snapped off the aluminum ring. He noticed how strangely clean and unstained his white knit long-sleeved shirt and duck trousers were, after a morning of heat, perspiration, and considerable exertion. Captain Ben smiled idly as he watched the sun's light flicker upon the gold medal and thin, rusty chain, for excellence in scholarship in Civic Studies, class 9-B, Seward High School, West Palm Beach, Florida, awarded June 1928 to Miss Jennifer Fraser; the same gold medal which had dangled from his neck for all these forty-three years, through antics of all sorts in the tough and brutal Pacific islands, World War II Merchant Marine engagements with the accompanying rigorous hazards and sacrifices, commercial junkets in search of marlin, tuna, bass, sawfish, bonefish, and especially, sharks of every conceivable kind, audio-visual aquamarine educational presentations to students in the public finishing schools of the nation, for which he continued to draw compensatory funds, guided tours in skiffs, sail, row, and glassbottomed boats of every description to eager listeners, strangers to the region—turned brown and dull on its bed of hair now white, through chilly evenings on dark piers with lightweight rod, shotgun, and flashlight, stalking whale, basking, mako, white, mackerel, tiger, lemon, great blue, bull, dusky, small black-tipped, large black-tipped, white-tipped, sand, nurse, hammerhead, brown, thresher, or perhaps, though less likely, Greenland, or Lake Nicaragua shark, or any of its other species, an animal of this breed having been the causative agent of the violent death of the original owner of this medal, in four inches of water, on a midnight beach picnic with a lone male companion, one Benjamin Ferdinand Halahan, nearly forty-three years ago.

With neat, careful attention, the captain folded his baggy white trousers up above his knees. Then, leaning back against the center rail of the canoe, he removed his sneakers and dangled his feet and legs into the water. He reached for another beer. The sharp, tangy mouthfuls of beer, coupled with the hot sun on his face and neck and the cool movement of the water, pleased him; once again he smiled.

As the hours passed, the sun moved lower in the sky: the water around the canoe was abundant with beer cans; the air became chilly and a breeze was blowing; the waves lapped against the sides and spilled into the boat. The captain, however, was asleep. His pink and fleshy legs, turning white with the change in temperature, swayed slightly in the now cold ocean. The sun was setting.

Then, of course, the waters around the canoe began to foam; the little boat itself rocked abruptly in response. Captain Ben awoke at once, noticing the sudden chill in the water and air. He could not feel his leg at first, so he shook it, and wiggled his toes. But the next moment he clearly felt it, the warmth and the tingling, the walls he now stroked against, the cavity that gripped his lower leg, and he held back. The throbbing and pulling aroused him: his heart was beating rapidly, his skin was tense and quivering; his fingers wrapped around the stiff, long instrument beside him. Closing his eyes, he moved an instant with the tossing vessel, the thrashing body, the rolling ocean, splashes of exciting wetness against his face, neck, his white knit shirt. Then he leaned forward somewhat, moving with the locked embrace, turning in circles, forcing his leg with controlled firmness in and then out of her. There was warm, thick fluid all around him: he felt it inside the orifice, with the subtle movements of his leg, and outside, splashing his angular thigh, surrounding and encompassing the joined members. A vibrant, shooting hotness tore through his body. Masterfully, with powerful thrusts, he pushed and scraped and dug, working towards what he sensed to be a mounting pressure. His head was spinning.

The captain smiled: he knew how soon he would feel the wonderful complete ease, her ponderous shuddering, the gentle coolness of his arms and legs, the soothing liquid all over him, and the sweet fiery caress. □

GEOFFREY GREEN is a Brooklyn native whose first shark encounters took place during childhood visits to the aquarium. He is a doctoral candidate at SUNY-Buffalo.

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DARA WIER

WHEN THE SKINS FALL APART

The fertilizer plant grinds fish into stink.
In the icebox a dove carcass cools while Moma
boils pumpkin in a castiron pot.

The house upfront is full of drying garlic
where you wait for the boy from Buras.
Riversand's soft as any barnbed.

You two roll in the garlic bulbs shaking the skins to pieces.
Moma stuffs shirts in starch clabber, twists them
into clubs and puts them aside for ironing.

After the first time, you go home, helping
Moma fix supper. You wonder why this takes so long.
On your stomach the white scale of dried sperm,

you spit on it to get the smell. Moma presses
blouses, white dress shirts, the starch drying
under her nails.

You take a razor to cut the blister
school shoes give your heels, pitching
the skin in the river.

When the cold lasts too long, too hard, green
oranges rot on the limbs. The knot on your belly
turns in like the knot on a navel orange.

You wish your stomach would drop off.
You dice up garlic heads, their smell
like drying blood lasts all day on your hands.

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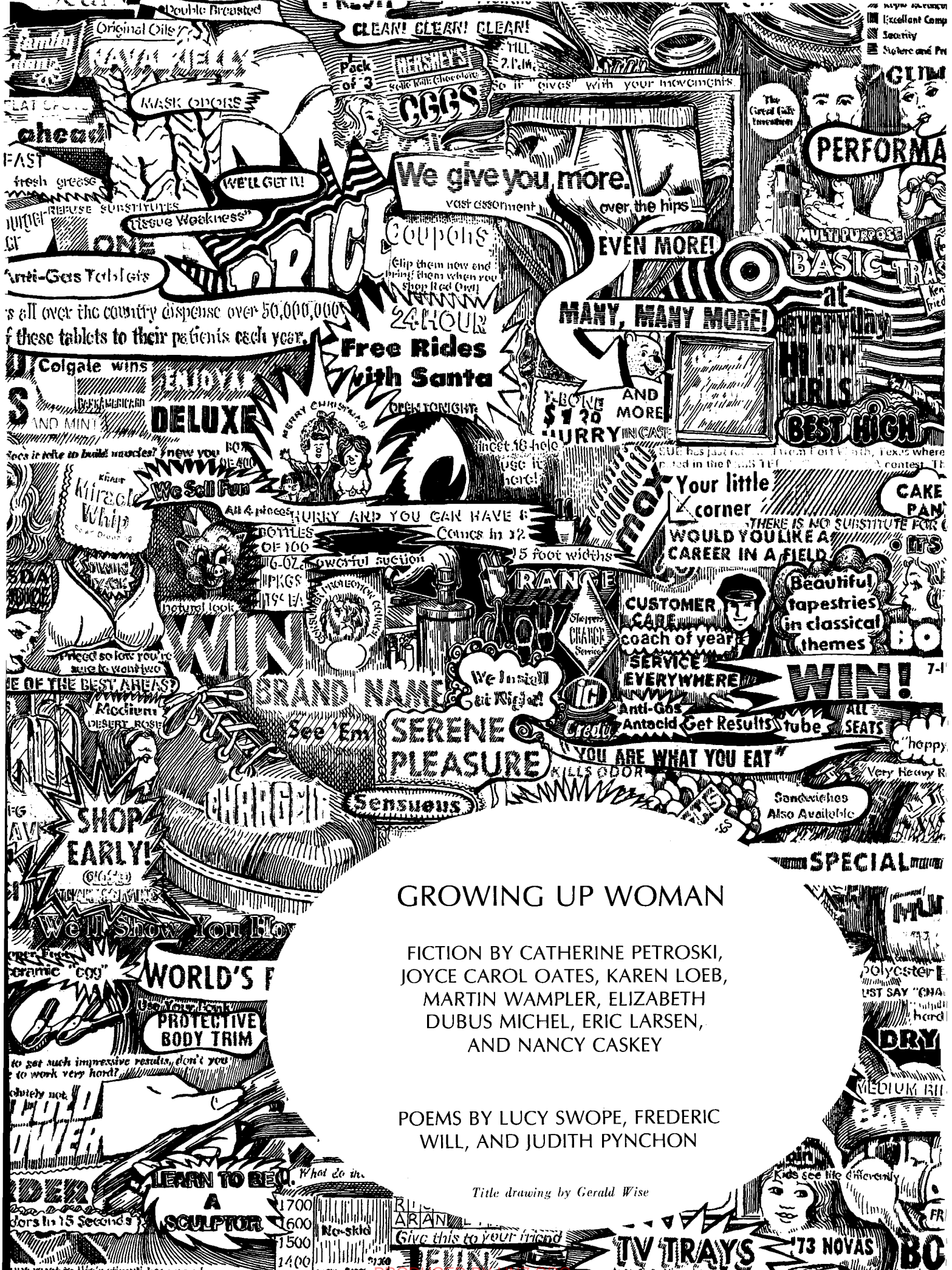

GROWING UP WOMAN

FICTION BY CATHERINE PETROSKI, JOYCE CAROL OATES, KAREN LOEB, MARTIN WAMPLER, ELIZABETH DUBUS MICHEL, ERIC LARSEN, AND NANCY CASKEY

POEMS BY LUCY SWOPE, FREDERIC WILL, AND JUDITH PYNCHON

Title drawing by Gerald Wise

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LUCY SWOPE

SOMETHING MORE THAN A HOUSE

1
It was hard seeing my mother.
She lay there pale against the white sheet
in a hospital gown with her hair gray and spiky on the pillow.
it was afternoon and the sun came slanting
through the window. I was looking at her flowers, their forms
blurred in the light. I could feel it
on my face, and my mother's eyes
as she looked at me. her hand,
like a sparrow, picked at the edge of the bandage.

I remember when she came to visit. she sat like a stranger
watching, as I moved through the house
feeding my children, and I could see how she wanted for me
something more than a house rented
at the edge of the woods, with a doorknob
that comes away in your hand when you try to enter
or leave.

Now her hand on its thin stem draws hieroglyphs
across her empty chest
and the fine skin is stretched
to tearing. they change the dressing and she sees the wound,
a red mouth,
the stitches mock her.

Her hands grow quiet.
she says "why don't you please go away"

2
Walking beside the pond in boston common
the path is a mosaic of elm and gingko leaves,
the complexion of a sycamore mottled like the skin
on the back of an old woman's hands.
I watch couples on the far bank
and dream we will buy a farm-house with tall chimneys
set against the woods. of your return
and entering
when I am suspended for a moment endless as the fall and lurch
of an owl as it strikes home,
and the sharp, sweet cry.

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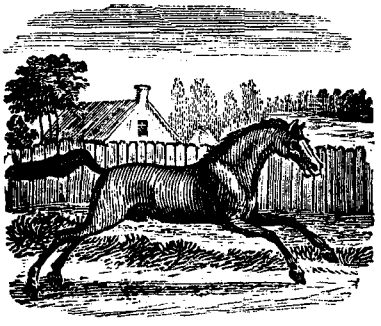

A STORY BY CATHERINE PETROSKI

BEAUTIFUL MY MANE IN THE WIND

I am a horse, perhaps the last mustang.

Walking

I hate you, I said. I hate you I hate you I hate you I hate you. The grass is green. This is my yard, this is my pasture. And I told her I hate her. My dam-mother. She does not understand horses. She doesn't even try. There are many things she doesn't notice about me.

Horses move their feet like this.

Horses throw their heads like this, when they are impatient, about to dash away to some shady tree. See how beautiful my mane in the wind.

Horses snort.

Horses whinny.

Horses hate her.

There is something in my hoof.

A rock. I must take off my shoe and try to get it out.

Siree, siree, yes-siree. Get-up horse.

My dam-mother.

Resting her hoof, at home

I am a girlhorse. I am building a house under the loquat tree. It is taking me a long time.

The blossoms are gone, fortunately, and the bees and the asps.

My house is made of logs, logs that daddy doesn't want. That is because our fireplace goes nowhere. It is just a little cave in the wall. There is no chimney on our house because there is neither a real fireplace nor a furnace because this is Texas and it is mostly hot here. Our fireplace has a permanent log. I am six.

I will be six next month.

The log has a little tube that connects it to the gas. I am told constantly that it is dangerous. The gas you can turn on and light with a stiff wooden match, then the log looks like it's burning, but it doesn't *really* look like it's burning. It *is* all very dangerous. After a while the log begins to glow orange and red fire colors and soon it begins to look like it is growing grey ashes on it. But not really. And it is so dangerous some of us or all of us could die from a mistake. The log gets hot.

And that is why I got the logs when our weeping willow died and mama pushed it over one Sunday afternoon. I called it my fountain tree, leaves instead of water. The bottom of the trunk was rotten and the tree just fell over and mama laughed and the baby laughed and I didn't laugh. We found some ugly grubs in the stump, sleeping. I hate her.

I hate also the baby who is a botherboy.

Daddy cut the willow tree into pieces I could carry and gave them to me and now I am building a horsehouse under the loquat and waiting for a manhorse to come along, which is the way it is supposed to happen.

I saw a picture of one and its name was centaur.

Of a Sunday afternoon, in her stable

My room I also hate. Bother loves it best and squeals when he gets to its door, because he thinks it's nicer than his own room, nicer than the bigroom, nicer than anyplace at all. Maybe because it has four windows and is on the corner of the house and looks out on the boxwood garden and the loquat. His only has two windows and is sort of on the inside of the house and it's easy to see why he might not like it. But the windows aren't the real reason, I don't think. He likes best all the blocks and the toy people. I build temples and bridges sometimes but then he comes along. He just throws blocks when he plays because he's just a baby. And a boy. And not a horse. Maybe a dog.

What I hate most about this room is picking up pieces of the lotto game when he throws it all over, picking up pieces of jigsaw puzzles that he has thrown all over. Picking up the spilled water, the blocks, the people. I hate his messes. I know that horses are not this messy. Mama says it is our fate to be left with the mess, but I don't think she likes it any more than I do. She doesn't clean up many.

I will just throw everything into the toy chest, a quick way to clean up. Maybe she won't look in there and see how I got the room so clean so fast. Half the time she doesn't pay any attention to how I do things anyway. Just so they're done.

She pays very little attention to me actually. She thinks I just read and I'm pretty sure she doesn't realize about the change. To a horse. She acts as though I'm still a girl. She doesn't observe closely. She is stupid.

CATHERINE PETROSKI is now living in a suburb of Chicago, after a long stay in Texas.

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This is a dumb room, and bother is even dumber. And lotto is a dumb stupid game and it's easy to see why a horse would hate it. It's supposed to make you sit still and be quiet. It's easy to see why a horse would not like a dumb brother. A horse has better things to do.

Administering herself first aid

The fact is there is a fossil in my hoof.

At school we have a hill that is called Fossilhill because there are a lot of fossils to be found there. She doesn't like it when I bring lots of fossils home in my pockets, but I always find more fossils than anybody else and you can't just throw them back. Actually the fossils are very easy to find. You just pick up a handful of dirt and you come up with fossils. The trick is to find big fossils. I can always find the biggest fossils of anybody, snails and funny sea snakes and shells of all kinds.

The boys run up and down Fossilhill and don't look where they're going. It's no wonder they don't find many fossils. They come and pull Horse's mane. They scuff through where Horse is digging with her hoof. They sometimes try to capture Horse, since she is perhaps the last mustang and of great value. But mostly they are silly, these boys. They don't make much sense, just a mess.

I dream sometimes I will find the fossil of an entire eohippus. The first horse, my ancestor. We learned that in Study.

Today I was trotting on the side of the hill and found the biggest fossil I have ever found in my life, which in horse is I think twelve or maybe twenty-four. Mrs. B didn't think it was all that nice and big, I guess, but she said she *thought* it was nice and said, That's nice, and then I found more and more fossils and other children came to the hill, even the girlygirls who never look for fossils because they always play games I don't know how to play, House and Shopping and Bad Baby. But they tried to find fossils today and asked me if this was a fossil or that and they found many, many fossils. And we all had a good time and got caliche all over ourselves and ground all into our knees, even the girls. And when we had found all the fossils we had time to find, Mrs. B. said, Put them in your pockets, children, and if you don't have pockets put them in your socks. And we did, and that's why there is a fossil in my hoof.

Girlygirls vs. Boyannoys vs. Horse

In my kindergarten there is a girl whose name is Larch. It is a funny name for a girl. It might not be such a funny name for a horse, but Larch isn't a horse because she knows the girlgames and is in fact the girl leader because she decides what games are going to be played and will let the boys tie her up. And the other girls too. When they tie people up they don't use real rope because Mrs. B wouldn't allow that. If they tie me up with their pretend rope it doesn't work. They think I just don't want to play, but the truth is I'm a horse and stronger than a girl and can break their girlygirl rope.

Larch's name is not just Larch. It is really Mary Larch but her mother calls her Larchy and my mother says it sounds like she has designs on smith. Whatever that means. I don't really care. My mother says so much I don't understand that I don't try much any more. It's more fun being a horse. More fun than being a girl too, because they just play Housekeeping Area and none of them really knows yet how to read even though they pretend to. I can tell because they can't get the hard words. So they don't let me play with them, especially Larch, and she can get the rest to do it too. My mother says it's all right because they wish they could enjoy stories themselves and next year they will all read and everything will be all right, but there are a lot of stories you can't really enjoy because they make you cry like the death of Charlotte. I don't know. Maybe Larch wouldn't cry.

The reading is the real problem between the horse and the girls. I guess. But sometimes they do let me play with them, if they need a victim or a hostage or an offering.

The girls talk out of their noses funny.

They wouldn't understand about being a horse, even though they know sometimes I am one. It wouldn't make sense to them. It wouldn't be possible to explain.

Cantering, loping, hand galloping — What's the difference

After dinner, which wasn't anything good again tonight, I sat and banged my hooves on the chair rungs until they took me to the stock show in the City Colosseum and we sat in the bleachers with cowboys and ladies who had mated and old men with broken legs and poodle puppies wearing holsters. I had to go to the bathroom. They asked me before we left the stable but I told them no, no for sure, because I was anxious to get there. Then we walked through the stock barn part and saw the hungry pigs bend the buckets flat and squeal and knock the sides of their pen. So it was hard to sit still and the men in the arena took forever to clear away the fences and bridges and everything from the trail ride, which was just finishing when we got there. The man behind me had pretty cowboy boots, the fanciest ones ever. Finally they did it though and the next class began. And the announcer is telling the riders, Walk your horses, please, walk. And they all walk. Then the announcer tells them, Trot, please, trot your horses. And they all trot. And then the announcer tells them, Canter your horses, canter, please. And they canter, but some of them gallop, some lope, and the announcer has to tell them again, Canter, please. Then they walk again. Then they lope. Then they hand-gallop. Then when they are all through, with the reverses and everything thrown in to confuse them, they line up facing the side of the arena, all in a row down the middle. And I have to go to the bathroom. A horse out there being judged goes teetee.

Herself among the others

Horses are I think lucky. They do not seem to have friends, such as people, you know, for they do not seem to need friends. They have enemies—the snakes, the potholes, the cougars, the fancy booted cowboys who don't know the difference between a canter and a hand gallop. What friends they have are on a very practical basis. Other horses with the same problems, any mustangs that might be left. There may not be any.

The wind.

A talk with herself

If I tell her what I am she will not believe me.

But what does it matter? I hate her.

If I tell the others what I am they may rope me and tell me to pull their wagon.

But what does it matter? They are stupid and could probably not get their wagon anywhere otherwise.

If I tell a boy what I am he will invade my loquat house, and maybe it will be good and maybe it will be bad.

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But what does it matter? He will finally run away.

If I tell daddy what I am he will act interested for a minute then drink some beer and start reading again.

But what does it matter, what does it matter?

And if I tell bother he will not understand even the words but will grab my mane and pull it until he has pulled some of it out.

What does it matter? I will whinny and run away.

Who could blame me? Horses should not be abused, ignored, or made fun of. After all they have done for man.

Discussing the weather or nothing at all

Just a little while ago, when I needed to go out to race a bit and throw my head in the wind, she stopped me and asked me who I thought I was. A girl? A horse? My name? I know what she's thinking. The others at school ask me the same question. So I said, A girl because I know that's what I'm supposed to think. One thing I know, not a girlygirl, which would be stupid playing games talking teasing being tied to the jungle gym. I won't. Sometimes it's hard not telling her what I really think, what I know. That sometimes I'm a girl, sometimes I'm a horse. When there are girlthings to do, like read, which a horse never does, or go in the car to the stockshow or for ice cream or any of those things, I have to be a girl, but when there are hillsides of grass and forests with lowhanging boughs and secret stables in loquat trees, I am a horse. Maybe someday there will be no changing back and forth and I will be stuck a horse. Which will be all right with me. Because horses think good easy things, smooth green and windy things, without large people or bothers or other kids or school, and they have enough grass to trot in forever and wind to throw their manes in high to the sky and cool sweet stream water to drink, and clover. □

FREDERIC WILL

EPICS OF AMERICA

LXXXII: THE MECHANICAL BRIDE

She sits by the trucker.
He turns to her, watches her empty eyes,
Lays his hand on her thigh. She responds
Nervously, blinking, gesturing stiffly,
Handing him a roadmap as if he had asked for it.
Thanking her, sighing, he returns to the road.
Far in the distance he can see a silo.
He thinks: I will leave her in some country store.
Reading his thought, she opens the door,
Throws herself outward toward the field of potatoes,
Sprawls in the ditch. Her mechanism starts,
Jolted, righting her, sending her jerkily off across the field.
He watches her for a minute lurching through the rows.
He gets out, starts to run after her, reconsiders.
From the car he watches her with double binoculars,
Twists them until she is a tiny spot.
Someone else will receive her, he tells himself;
He starts the car. He drives into the distance.
He cuts himself off from the thing he loved.

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JOYCE CAROL OATES is prolific as ever. Her next novel is The Assassins, *her next story collection is to follow, and the excerpt below is from neither, but from yet another novel.*

FICTION BY JOYCE CAROL OATES

From her novel,

How Lucien Florey Died, and Was Born

CORINNE:

Now don't let the conversation swing onto the subject of jobs, if you can help it," David warned. "Ed told me Suthie is having some trouble, he didn't elaborate. And the Busch girl, he said, she was in some clinic in Los Altos for a while last year, her husband asked him to try to avoid subjects that excited her—we've never met her, have we?—I think it might have been—Ed deduced this, Busch didn't tell him—some nervous trouble or maybe drugs or both, she had a miscarriage just after they got married."

The rainy season was upon them: and yet, hurrying up the walk to the Dixons' apartment building, together, close and clumsy, beneath David's black umbrella, Corinne felt a kind of exultation. She liked the Dixons. She liked the promise, the openness, of an evening out—away from the smoggy drizzle of a weekend at the Buena Vista Towers, with no hope of eluding thoughts of her lover and of the school week coming up, or of discovering some oasis, some solitude, in which to give herself up to these thoughts. Her husband never left her: he worked at the dining room table or in the living room, and, if he felt the need to drive out to Palo Alto to use the library, he would have been hurt had Corinne declined to come along. *You must get out of this atmosphere*! he would laugh. And she felt a more immediate pleasure, the simple relief at being able to move from the cramped, depressing bed-sitter David rented across Mill Road, near an industrial park—the house really was noisy, and ill-heated, and rain came through his single window, which opened by way of a kind of crank that had come loose in its socket—and to have some warm, hopefully crowded place to get to, to lose themselves in. She felt so elated that when David cautioned her about mentioning how pleased Meyer was with his most recent chapter, she laughed, squeezing his arm to let him know how obedient she was, how proud of him she was, and at the same time how needless it was of him, his cautionary guidance of her. Fortunately, they had had only a brief hour together, in his room. It was a Friday evening and she had arrived there a little late . . . forty-five minutes late.

It was thought that Ed Dixon's father partly supported him, since he and his wife lived in an attractive, new apartment building on a narrow residential street just off the Camino Real; it was built around a patio, and its palm trees were erect and healthy, dripping, gushing rain, unlike the scrawny palm trees in Monte Vista. Spotlights flooded the flagstone walk and the front steps. While David shook the umbrella and closed it, Corinne pressed the brass button beside the Dixons' name, aware of her edgy glittering excitement. Stray unshouted words like slivers entered her mind, *What if . . . ? What might . . . ? Ah, disaster! Chaos!* but she paid no attention to them; she was really quite happy.

The Dixons had a basement apartment, rather damp, but well-lighted and colorfully decorated, and Corinne stepped into it—already smiling, greeting Ed's earnest and sincerely delighted wife with a warm sincerity of her own, exchanging the usual remarks *You look very well!—You're looking very well!* She and David blinked, stepping in to such light, and needing to estimate, at once, who was here, how many guests would be here, was anyone here whom David disliked?—but Corinne saw, saw with disappointment, that there was only another couple there, the Busches, and a single man, Suther-

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land, and that the table was set only for seven people. She knew everyone except Busch's wife, introduced as Jill, Jillie, a pretty young woman who smiled widely so that her gums showed, extending a bare, still-tanned arm, to shake Corinne's hand. It was a spontaneous gesture that pleased Corinne, or at least it seemed spontaneous. For a few minutes they talked about the weather—someone's apartment roof was leaking —and Clara Dixon commented on Jill's tan, how healthy she looked, nut-brown still, while the rest of them were so pale. "Corinne—it's Corinne, isn't it? It's very nice to see you again," Sutherland said. Temporarily and accidentally together, they exchanged a few remarks, and something in Corinne's face—some unfocused, featureless reflection of the living room's lights—must have intimidated him. He was a tall, rather confused-looking man in his early thirties, handsome, with blond hair that was evidently styled, lifting back from his anxious forehead in a graceful wave, and muttonchop whiskers, and even finer clothes than Corinne remembered: this evening he wore a pale green shirt and a necktie of wine-and-silver stripes and an off-white suit. He blinked at her, his light eyelashes moving as if in time with an interior agitation, and Corinne—who sensed how women disturbed him—moved into the room, commenting on how good the furniture looked—Clara had painted some of the wicker chairs black, hadn't she?—and how much she liked the Navajo rug, and how good the food smelled—how happy she was to be here tonight!

Then everyone sat down. Corinne sat at one end of a wicker sofa, sinking into the yellow cushions and yellow-and-black-striped pillows, relieved, grateful, not knowing why it seemed so wonderful to her, to be here tonight, to have been invited —by way of being her husband's wife—and to see, reflected in nearly everyone's face (for Clara Dixon was a little distracted: she was thinking about something in the kitchen) that generosity, that easiness of friendship requiring nothing but its own reflection, back and forth, smiles, enthusiasm, simple good-natured remarks. . . . With one part of her mind she was very much at home here, or in any social group in which she had nothing at stake: she had nearly forgotten, since she and David went out like this so rarely, how such an occasion enlivened her. And then, and then of course it was all meant to be pleasant, engineered toward that end. . . . *Why the hell are you late*? . . . *forty-five minutes late*? . . . She had had to stammer a reply. But already the reply and her guilt and his angry bewilderment were forgotten, and whatever she had said would not be explored, so obvious a lie could not be analyzed.

The furniture was lightweight, really summer furniture of the kind Corinne's mother had kept on the veranda, its black lacquer shone, and the colors of pillows and netlike drapes and the Navajo rug, and the several abstract paintings on the walls—and Jill Busch's pink dress—mixed in Corinne's sight, like music, like the mingled smell of smutty wax from candles burning on a sideboard in the dining area, and the smell of onions frying, all swirling together, effortlessly together. She accepted a drink but didn't drink it; alcohol went to her head too quickly.

Ed Dixon was a soft-voiced, soft-bodied young man in his late twenties, who was doing research on a topic tangentially related to David's, though less mathematical than David's; it centered on a problem of manpower forecasting in one of the underdeveloped nations. He had always been pleasant to Corrine, as if sensing how she might feel out of place with them. She believed this was because of her accent. At times people could not understand her, though she tried to imitate the way they spoke. Naturally no one wanted to keep asking her to repeat herself. . . . Ed sat on the arm of the sofa, most of his weight on his feet, awkwardly, asking her how she enjoyed her job . . . he had heard she was teaching underprivileged children somewhere . . . where was it, in Daly City? Corinne corrected him and Jill Busch, who was listening, asked if Monte Vista wasn't that awful place with the Police Commissioner who ordered those boys beaten to death . . . ? Corinne said that nothing had been proven, so far, but that the Police Commissioner and the Common Council were running the hearings—it had been individual policemen who had evidently done the beatings—but it was very confused— Jill, her lips gleaming a white-beige-pink, lighter than her skin, asked Corinne if the black students at her school were causing trouble; and what about *her* . . . ? What on earth was she doing there . . . ?

Corinne tried to explain that it was really North Monte Vista High School that was dangerous; uneasily, conscious of sounding too defensive, she said that most of the faculty at her school was white, everyone got along well, there had been no trouble . . . everyone got along well. ". . . lucky to have a job," she heard someone mutter: it must have been Sutherland.

Then the conversation drifted onto something else, so Corinne was able to relax; to become invisible. Her euphoria had faded. She looked from one to another to another of the faces surrounding her, from dark-haired smiling David Andersch to Mick Busch with his short-trimmed hair and his lean face—his glasses like David's, black-rimmed and neat —smiling as well, tentatively; to Sutherland, whom she would never be able to call *Suthie* as the others did, there in a tub-like chair across from her, drinking too fast, laughing nervously and dipping his hand toward his glass as he drank, perhaps wondering what he was doing here—he was a post-doctoral fellow, had done graduate work in England, was supposed to be a genius and—but of course David Andersch was a "genius" as well—and it was always said of Ed Dixon that his soft slovenly amiable manner was misleading: he had entered Stanford at the age of sixteen, had graduated at the age of nineteen, and, with the exception of some years spent in England, had been in the area ever since, working on a complicated, many-branched subject nowhere near completion. . . . From Sutherland's busy face Corinne allowed her gaze to move on to Jill Busch, and she saw what she had dreaded, had half-dreaded since the instant she'd seen the woman: a glassy glazed hectic euphoric expression like her own, though worse because of the woman's bright pink outfit and her dark, leatherish tan, and her habit of nodding slowly and emphatically with her eyes widened. Her hair was black, like an Indian's, and as lustreless and straight; her bangs skimmed the tops of her eyebrows, flat and dramatic.

Clara stood in the doorway, smiling at what was being said—they were joking about the local danger from rabid bats—and caught Corinne's eye, to let her know, smiling, making a gesture with her beringed hand, that she was happy to see her again; it had been so many months . . . early last summer, wasn't it . . . ? Since they'd seen each other? "Someone mentioned you were working," she said, speaking across another conversation. "What is it—not nursing, is it?

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No—you're not a nurse, are you? Teaching?—yes, teaching?" Like her husband, Clara was soft-bodied, her waist thick, her legs and ankles muscular; she was an attractive woman, dressed in a long embroidered dress or smock, oatmeal-colored, of a thick texture, the embroidered design gleaming green or iridescent blue depending upon how light caught it. Corinne thought of her lover's quilt: she shuddered, as if the damp of the apartment, near her legs, had suddenly touched her. How lovely, heavy, how stale-smelling that quilt of his, sewed by his mother, surely, or by a grandmother . . . Clara was telling her about her own abortive attempts at teaching, making a joke of it, she had trained for work with handicapped children—"That was in my time of adolescent inflation"—spoken with light, fond mockery— "up in Tacoma, where I was born"—and Jill interrupted to ask enthusiastically Oh were you born *there*?—and for a moment the conversation swung to that part of the world: a discussion of the comparative rainfall and fog-density and frequency of sunlight, the Bay Area *vs*. the coast of the Pacific Northwest. That led, with the usual dizzying rush, to a discussion of other related matters: the conversation between David and Mick Busch and Sutherland, about an evidently iconoclastic essay in *U.S. News & World Report*, was interrupted; David glanced over, irritated, and Mick Busch spoke with authority about climatic conditions, the extraordinary diversity of landscape in this area alone, the fact that *California* was not a state so much as an entire nation, not a nation, perhaps, so much as an entire galaxy. *That* was the problem, Sutherland said contemptuously. "What problem? What problem?" Jill asked. She smiled, showing her healthy gums and her fine white teeth; she leaned forward, engagingly. Her husband ignored her and addressed them all, though he was looking at Clara, the hostess, Clara standing in an attitude of absolutely rapt attention, only her fingers toying nervously with the strands of amber and jade beads she wore indicating—to Corinne at least—that she really must duck back into the kitchen, she really *must* break away—however—in the meantime she smiled and listened to Mick, who explained laughingly that he was an "amateur expert" on weather and geographical phenomena, and was spending his days and evenings in Palo Alto trying to relate such natural things to the economic ideologies that were his official interest— Might there not be a direct relationship between states of mind and external conditions?—a *direct* relationship, in which the human intelligence has no freedom whatsoever, but simply responds to an atmospheric condition?—in which case— Ed heaved himself to his feet, sighing, as if he had heard this before from Mick; he asked if anyone wanted another drink?—in a stage whisper, not wanting to interrupt his friend. Sutherland handed him his glass. —A counter-conversation began between Sutherland and Ed, who stood over him, flexing and relaxing his big shoulders—he had played football as an undergraduate, Corinne had been told—his nose broken several times, he had the appearance, now, of being kindly and subversive at the same time, intelligent and battered, a scholar's squint to his eyes, a roguish look to his thick nose and jaw: she liked him without ever being able to talk with him, only to respond to his brief polite puzzled queries, as if he wanted to communicate with her—she was David Andersch's wife, after all—but really could not make sense of her. That was the case with most of her husband's acquaintances. They smiled at her and through her, they asked her a few questions, they nodded, smiled, and, knowing that she had done graduate work in English Literature and was now a "secondary school teacher", could only mutter that it was a good thing people like her were going into education on that level; otherwise. . . . Otherwise, who would? Ed's conversation with Sutherland involved a rapid exchange of information about the probable nature of a committee meeting that had taken place that morning at the University . . . *Do you know anything more about it*? . . . *McIntosh told me . . . I heard. David, here, told me this afternoon that. . . . David, do you know anything more*? Mick was giving them statistics about rainfall; he really did seem to be an expert and, like most normally shy people—like Corinne's husband also—he did not quite know how to handle so much attention, and spoke rapidly, as if fearful he would lose his audience, his ostensible point of interest being, still, Clara Dixon. David was seated near him, though a little behind him, so it was not really rude of him to turn aside, drawn to the other conversation, being so directly asked to join it, to supply important information. He rattled ice cubes in his glass and leaned over, his head thrust forward in a gesture Corinne had come not to like . . . from the front he appeared to be, he truly was, offering himself to whoever was before him, but from the side he seemed dangerously off-balance, the head so far forward that the neck muscles had to tighten in order to support it, and the shoulder muscles were forced to hunch forward as well, the entire skeleton thrown off balance, and all out of an intensity of eagerness, an exaggeration of courtesy; or fear. Corinne could not make out his words, did not want to interpret his facial mannerisms, the fleeting ironic grimaces, the ironic smiles, but it comforted her in a wifely way to see the interest with which Sutherland received David's news: Sutherland after all was probably the person of distinction here, an ex-Rhodes scholar, a Guggenheim Fellow some years before, precocious and elegant, rather British in his accent and his way of affirming the remarks of others, however inconsequential, with emphatic sounds—*Really! Is it*—? *Actually, you don't say*—? A Texas boy, just the same, David had once remarked of him —and others had laughed, agreeing. Now David held his attention completely and Ed, hovering over them, his bulky sporty suitcoat opening, unbuttoned, to screen David's face from Corinne: Corinne had gathered, from stray and ostensibly casual remarks made by David earlier that week, that an important meeting of the Graduate Committee had been scheduled for that morning, that budget allotments for continued research were to be discussed . . . post-doctoral grants . . . matters that did not really concern him, he had said, since Dr. Meyer was his advisor and had so much personal power in the Department. . . . And it was known, David said, that Meyer always defended his men, always; which could not be said for certain others . . . members of the staff who did not defend or might actually betray . . . Mick was telling them that the Bay was an incredible natural boundary: to the north, because of the rainfall, forests, those lovely forests, to the south, less rainfall, blistering summers . . . water a valuable resource . . . and he was convinced, though he was a Midwesterner, from Iowa, that the experience of moving to certain areas of California, especially those with an essentially Mediterranean climate—he was convinced that— A buzzer sounded in the kitchen; Clara had to excuse herself. *But please don't let me interrupt you*!—*it's so fascinating*! Deflated, Mick had to turn

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his attention to Corinne; he spoke past his wife, now playing with a strand of hair, curling it round and round her forefinger and humming under her breath, asking her if she didn't agree with him?—that it might be disturbing, perhaps even dangerous, to venture into parts of the world for which one's biological self was not really prepared? Corinne nodded, thinking of her mother's warning about the bacteria in the water—and of her mocking of that warning—and of her terrible attacks of diarrhea those first weeks on the Coast—she said *Yes*, sensing that he wished only to be affirmed, the momentum of his words not impeded even by a question—though, since his hostess had left so abruptly, and since an evidently important conversation was taking place, in undertones, just to his right, his momentum was slowing of its own accord. Corinne mentioned that she had read just recently—she was preparing a unit on ecology—that some scientists believed that people did not exist in themselves anyway but only as aspects of their environment—*Ecology?*—Jill asked—*Ecology in high school?*—in which case—there must be a direct, immediate relationship between—but here she faltered, seeing Mick's frown (evidently he disagreed with those scientists or was irritated with his wife's too-vivacious behavior)—"But I shouldn't have said *only*," Corinne told them, "I didn't mean to suggest that it's in any way something—something meager." —But she had lost them entirely; Mick was lighting a cigarette, his head bent, inhaling so that one corner of his mouth twisted up and the nostril on that side widened. Jill asked Corinne who those scientists were?—how could you trust them?—everything depends upon tests, laboratory conditions, the terms of the experiments, the vocabulary, the expectations, the assumptions—*And who's financing it all!*—Ed Dixon said with a laugh. Jill stared at him. She was still smiling, but the smile lost its elasticity.

"That isn't funny," she said.

The remark somehow isolated itself: somehow, because of a break in other noises, it took on a weight that embarrassed everyone.

Corinne tried to change the subject. She asked Ed whether he and Clara had had a chance to go sailing very much the past summer . . . hadn't they mentioned wanting to visit some friends of theirs on Vancouver Island . . . and . . . Before Ed could reply Clara returned, carrying a tray of hors d'oeuvres, *They're quite hot, be careful,* and Jill said, finishing her drink, that it was never amusing to her as it seemed to be to others —judging from those disgusting cartoons in the newspaper recently—all the corruption, the bribery, the disclosures that even apparently humanitarian people, conservation people, would actually be susceptible to bribes— David pointed out that everyone, after all, is susceptible to *something*. Bribery need not be always in terms of money. But he was interrupted by Clara, explaining the hors d'oeuvres—since Sutherland was poised over them, not knowing which kind to take—some had a mushroom-and-bacon mixture inside them, some were stuffed with a Mexican mixture that was quite spicy—she apologized for the fact that a few were evidently scorched—the crusts were uneven, some much thinner than others, due to her incompetence. This caused Sutherland to exclaim that they were delicious: he seemed really moved, very pleased indeed. *Delicious. The crusts are perfect.*

. . . David went on, saying that corporate California, after all, had billions of dollars to work with; the conservation people had only their own energies and good will and the backings of certain foundations . . . *Who among us couldn't be bribed?* Part joke, part serious commentary, but waved away by Ed's good-natured remark about the dedication of the state government to money, sheer money, and that it was tourism *vs.* timber when you came down to it, tourism *vs.* oil spills, the seagulls and the pelicans and the redwoods to be driven through were worth money, too, but the value was not so visible.

They talked about the redwoods; about the deserts; about dune buggies and snowmobiles; Corinne, sipping at her drink, lost the connection and found herself somewhere else, in another context, sipping at a drink—a glass of water—standing in the tiny kitchen of Jacob's apartment—hearing him in the other room, humming to himself as if he were alone.

Nothing will happen. Nothing. Nothing.

She woke to time having passed, to a familiar voice. . . She smiled.

. . . Susceptible to *something*. David, flushed by the alcohol, his face enlivened by the truth of what he was saying, spoke much more charmingly than Mick Busch did: he knew enough to vary his tone of voice, to smile, to glance from face to face, even—as if by accident—glancing at Corinne to see if she agreed. She was thinking of Jacob; she was thinking of a child, a girl five or six years old, being forced to run between rows of boys, having arrived at school one morning a few minutes too early, before the custodian had opened the doors . . . back of the grammar school on Oak Street, in Gulfport, that alcove at the rear, the asphalt-paved playground, the area where two walls came together and the debris and dust could swirl round and round, there, a tiny fascinating cyclone that went invisible and came back into visibility and went invisible again as you watched. She was thinking of . . . thinking of . . . She was feeling him inside her, in her body. She knew him, there; she could hold him there, focused, concentrated, in a tension exquisite as music, as complex and instinctive and sacred as music, and so gentle was he, so much like her, in a way, as to seem to require exactly what she required . . . thinking of that, and of the child, the terrified Corinne, boxed in against two walls that came together, there in the dead brittle leaves and the candy wrappers and the crumpled waxed paper,

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where one of the boys—no more than eleven or twelve years old, she knew, and only a child himself, she knew—though she had not known at that time—brought up between her legs a bar of some kind, part of a railing, something made of metal and not wood, she remembered that, so that she was forced to straddle it while they laughed at her— That buried memory had returned to her, only a few hours ago: holding Jacob, loving Jacob, and afterward trying to tell him . . . trying to explain to him . . . not wanting to intimidate him with her passion, her euphoric sorrow, that perhaps she wanted only to be redeemed of that memory: he was the man who had redeemed her, he was the lover who redeemed the others, the other men, the rest of the world. . . . *Redeem. Redemption.* She had not wanted to frighten him, with such words. *Am I your savior, then?* — he might ask, playfully. *Am I to expiate the sins of other men? — what about my own, then?*

. . . David and Sutherland were carrying on a conversation that had to do with ecology and population growth and demographers' forecasts and migration and the underdeveloped *vs.* the underpopulated . . . the others were listening, Ed and Clara stood together, facing their guests, nodding, pleased that *things were going well, some stimulating remarks were being made* . . . Mick Busch wanted to interrupt, to add some statistics and facts and what must have been contradictory information, since he seemed quite agitated, but he could not get a word in: David and Sutherland allowed room for each other to speak, but with such economic agility that no one else could slide in. However, it was time for dinner. It was time for dinner. They must move into the dining area. . . . David said that the politics of the future would deal with one matter only, which would be presented as a moral issue but which, in fact, was a matter of sheer survival in terms of the economic well-being of certain nations, which was—and here Sutherland agreed—so closely bound up with the identity of these nations that it was equivalent to biological survival itself—since zero population growth was very nearly a reality in certain parts of the United States and Canada—underpopulated countries —especially Canada! with its 22 million people—*Is that all?* Ed asked; he seemed genuinely to have forgotten or not to have known—with so few people, comparatively speaking, and other areas of the world grotesquely over-populated, it was obvious that—

No no no, Sutherland said, jumping to his feet clownishly, shuddering, no *No*. The British were going under, with *that* problem; suffocating, drowning, in the death throes of their own history as a white, imperialistic people . . . basically Protestant, that is, protestant, and savage, without religious ideals to slow them down. . . . The welfare state was ruining them, the flood of black migration was ruining them, had already ruined certain cities. And in addition . . . Here Mick Busch took advantage of David's momentary surprise at the fact that dinner was ready—Clara was tugging at his sleeve—to say that he agreed with David—*Of course David can't be faulted*—but it was never going to be a public issue, *never*, because politicians would be terrified of putting to the people questions the people could not possibly deal with. . . . *What questions? What people?* Jill had been on her way to the table, but paused, dramatically, swiveling her body at the waist so that her long boyish torso was silhouetted in the pink dress—she was slightly drunk, but nervously vivacious—even a little daring. Her husband glanced at her, distracted; he seemed not to have heard her, to have heard only a tone of voice that alarmed him. He rose, jerkily, dropping a cocktail napkin he had crumpled, his voice strident now as if the sheer antagonism between himself and his wife were empowering him—saying that though it might require an enormous propaganda machine and enormous responsibilities for the censors, nevertheless the fact of the world's starving peoples, the incontestable fact of the acceleration of starvation and population growth in the near future—not to mention the grotesque problem of the children—*What children*? Clara asked—would eventually have to be blotted out of the consciousness of the rest of the world, just wiped away, obliterated: otherwise there would be chaos.

Corinne got to her feet. She said, bewildered, that he couldn't possibly mean what he—

—I think you're wrong, you're quite wrong, David interrupted. He and Mick made their way toward the dinner table, absent-mindedly, David gesturing with his free hand—with the brotherly advantage of being several inches taller than Mick—explaining that the issue could certainly be put to the people as a political-moral issue *on the surface*, because by that time—well, already—at the present time, indeed—so much television coverage of events like the Vietnam War and other atrocities, so much newsreel footage of what had once been considered to be obscene, it was so horrible, had dulled the sensitivities of the masses—they could take only so much, after all, and soon even burnt babies and decapitated peasant women produced yawns; one could always count on this desensitization, wasn't it a psychological phenomenon, a neuro-psychological fact?— Jill laughed, *Yes, do you know what it's called*? They ignored her; Mick muttered something about the necessity for retaining—in a public, official way—as a culture—as a civilization, at least—the necessity for retaining the illusion of certain ideals, after all—and if—if— At the dinner table there was a new alignment: Ed, the host, sat at one end of the table and seemed to tower over them immediately, framed by the glow of candlelight from a row of candles on a sideboard, behind him, a half-dozen red candles in small carved holders, lovely smooth-grained wood; he snatched Mick's very words away from him and continued, saying that no culture could survive that did not suggest to its masses that it was behaving in such a manner—in such a moral manner—as to promote the general survival of the species of which, after all, it was a part—that enormous efforts of propaganda would have to be made, eventually, just to keep people sane, and the liberals and humanitarians and well-wishers—*He means me*! Clara laughed—*I mean myself as well*, Ed smirked—would end up, just wait, on the side of the big corporate machines, writing propaganda for them, perhaps, because the unsentimental fact of life was—

That altruism ends precisely at the point at which the individual experiences a conflict of interest, David said.

Ah yes.

That was Basic Economics; even the freshmen knew that.

. . . They were being served soup, mushroom soup, spooned out for them by Ed himself, self-mocking, cheerful, pompous, proud of his wife's cooking—and obviously pleased with the attractive table she had set—a dark red linen tablecloth, gray stoneware plates, tall chunky gleaming water goblets, stainless steel flatware of a delicate Danish design, with smooth wooden handles—in the center of the table three tall,

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slim red candles in those handsome holders—and, presiding over them, taking advantage of the other men's momentary disorientation (Sutherland was even hesitating about whether to take his seat—thinking he should use the Dixons' bathroom, perhaps—) he told them frankly that he wasn't a religious person, himself, but he had been convinced at one time in his life—he wouldn't go into the details, they were personal and probably unrepresentative—that without the ideal, the religious ideal, all right, then, he laughed, the *biological ideal* that one is behaving exactly in accord with the species as a whole—without that—illusory or not, absurd or not, without that—there would be chaos.

Corinne asked, in the silence that followed, whether that meant—did it mean—had they really been saying what she believed—the powerful nations would never accept responsibility for other parts of the world?—but that they were doomed if they did not? And—

Sutherland interrupted, laying a hand on her arm. He was suddenly very gallant, very robust. He told her that she had missed a cue somewhere; *he* had never indicated that doom was inevitable; *he* believed, as a Classical man, that the responsibility for survival begins from the inside and works its way very, very gradually outward—and at times must withdraw, must turn back, must insulate itself against the environment itself, in order to survive. "Your first responsibility is to yourself," he said. And then, glancing across the table at David—David whom he seemed to like—he said, "And your second responsibility is to your husband, and after that —well—after that you have time for what is called secondary investments, eh? The single-celled organism must survive; the single unit of the cell must survive, after all, or the collective creatures would never have come into existence. . ."

"Cells survive well enough, by themselves," Mick said. "It's only when they join in with others . . . to make some kind of group-life . . . only at that point does death enter. . . . Or am I remembering it incorrectly?"

They spoke for a while, with less enthusiasm, of biology and biophysics; but no one seemed to know much about the subjects. David volunteered that one of the men in a rooming house he sometimes stayed in—he faltered, blushing —evidently he hadn't told everyone, or had forgotten he had told them, of the arrangement he and Corinne had this year —one of the medical students, a young Indian, an East Indian was running experiments with brains—not cat or rat but human brains, willed to the Medical Center—and, to hear him talk, the most extraordinary discoveries were being made —revolutionary discoveries—But it was his opinion, David's opinion, that since biological research was almost completely funded by government agencies, it would be a political issue, always, always and forever a political issue, and beyond politics there was always economics, and so—

They all laughed. Even Jill laughed, shaking her head.

"How did the four of you get into the right field, was it destiny?" she asked. She smiled at them, holding a soup spoon dramatically before her lips. "How did you manage to get into the center of the universe, was it just an accident, or your intelligence, or grace, or—?"

"Don't," Mick said.

Ed adroitly changed the subject by explaining the wine: a Cruse wine, red, a unique wine, he believed, and this particular bottle was . . . .

Clara passed a large wooden salad bowl around. Tacos salad, she explained, oh it seems complicated but it isn't, really, she hoped they would like it . . . kidney beans and lettuce and tomatoes and chopped green chiles . . . yes, that was avocado, yes, and a little sour cream . . . she hoped there wasn't too much chili powder in it, she and Ed had developed such a tolerance for hot spices . . . they'd spent a few months in Mexico . . . and she'd shredded a little cheese, very sharp English cheddar, did any of them know that wonderful delicatessen at the Somerset Mall . . . ? Then her tone altered slightly, she was addressing Jill directly: asking her about a course Jill had evidently been taking in graphics and printing, was it? . . . no, in modern dance? So Jill told them about her classes, speaking now in a subdued, almost flat voice. The conversation drifted onto the need for exercise, for sports . . . and Corinne, seated between Sutherland with his whiskers and hair, and Ed himself, so burly and comfortable in his size, felt sheltered, protected, silenced. She knew it was a mistake to drink this wine, but she drank it anyway. . . . Had that tension been in her, in her from the beginning, and had Jacob only touched it, given life to it? . . . so that now she was sluggish and giddy by turns with it, as with a secret pregnancy, and turned upon strangers the over-bright radiance of her face, which they could not comprehend? She knew herself suddenly beautiful, with a glittering and unpredictable beauty, so small-boned that it seemed, in her, a kind of perversity—that sexual knowledge, expressed in the melancholy hollows of her eyes or in the sudden brightness of her eyes, the playful shapes her mouth might take. Because she found herself making jokes, she could not resist staring at Ed in his self-conscious pleasure, a husband, a satisfied husband, one of the young industrious rivals, one of the resident "geniuses", thinking that the difference between this man and her lover was so enormous . . . the difference between the other men and her lover, so enormous . . . that it had to be a joke, it had to be laughed at.

Otherwise. . . .

Otherwise she would not think of it.

To turn in expectation, to turn openly, happily, joyfully . . . to turn to another human being . . . to Ed Dixon, or to Sutherland on her right . . . to any other human being. . . . To turn, and to discover that this person was not Jacob: what a death that might be, what a grotesque murder of her being!

And so now, as people around her commented on the excellence of Clara's salad, and Clara herself, as if released by these words, began to speak more abstractly—more consciously—re-introducing the topic of, what was it, what David had argued so well, could they return to that?—she had some questions to ask, she was not uninformed on this subject since she helped Ed with translations occasionally—yes, the French economist Landeau—yes, she rather liked him, what she could understand of him— So now Corinne made an effort not to compare these people, these good, interesting, friendly people, with her lover: she must live in the world as they lived in it, she must participate in the complicated maneuvers of dinner parties, no private laughter, no private sobbing, no, none—did she want to end up with Jill Busch's look of bitter glazed defiance? Jill, beside Corinne's own husband, seemed for a moment his natural mate: the flat-cut black bangs, the mouth in repose sucked in, miniaturized, almost prim. And David, eating, eating hungrily—his attention for the moment on his plate—a hungry man, wasn't he?—not well-nourished,

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was he?—subdued, now that the exciting burden of conversation had been taken up by someone else, in ostensible deference to him, but really to allow Clara the privilege of speaking now—though she was their hostess, with her flushed happy cheeks and her beads twisted sideways, her gaze moving from plate to plate, glass to glass, to see if all were well, though she was Ed's plump husky-voiced wife she was nevertheless a young woman of intelligence: she had done graduate work in a number of areas, Corinne knew, though she had never completed any program. Perhaps she was waiting to have a baby: waiting, then, for Ed to receive his Ph.D., to get a job, waiting for them to be expelled from the paradise of Stanford University. And then their lives would begin, somewhere else. She mentioned having brought up earlier the disappointing work she had done with handicapped children, so handicapped, herself, she and the other teachers, by demoralizing working conditions—*Because they can't talk, some of them, because they can't express themselves, people imagine those children have no feelings*!—ill-lit, ill-smelling, crowded, a sense of their wasting everyone's time with their idealism, trying to teach children not to gnaw their hands down to the bone, to dress themselves, to shape words with their mouths . . . and she had been very young, then, too young, only twenty-one years old, and it got to the point where she hadn't been able to wait until she got home, to burst into tears. . . . But if it must always be a case of the allotment of funds, if we must always compete for money, then. . . . Then the future belonged to the same people who possessed the present; then. . . .

Glumly, Sutherland was trying to joke about his own "handicap." No one wanted to laugh with him, no one was certain what he meant . . . but he didn't notice their lack of response, he went on to ask if they had heard about McIntosh, all the letters he had sent out, the half-dozen interviews he had been promised, one of them *from*—of all places!—that wretched Pacifica Marketing Researchers, currently under indictment by the Federal Government for fraud—the most, the *most* depressing— And so they had been drawn into the subject of jobs, exactly the subject David had warned Corinne about, and while Sutherland drank his wine and pushed bits of lettuce and tomatoes around on his plate Corinne tried to seem interested, since the others were so quiet. *But was it really so depressing. . .? Perhaps. . .? What about the junior colleges. . .?* She noticed David glancing over at her, as if alarmed; he had misunderstood her intention. Sutherland sighed. He spoke of the perversity of it, after decades of boom times, of such spectacular growth in this part of the world—vulgar and laughable, yes, and contemptible, yes, but profitable to all concerned—now the population forecasts were turned upside-down, investment in California industry was down, no new buildings, price of real estate in certain areas dropping —those damned conservationists! —all that publicity! and some junior and community colleges were shutting down, actually shutting down. And the universities . . . . Well, it was tight, very tight. Very tight. And, of course, personal bias played so powerfully a part . . . no one knew, really, no one knew the extent of it . . . . Over the rib roast, over the steamed rice in a heavy earthenware crock, passed carefully around the table, over the refilling of the wine glasses, now came the litany Corinne almost knew by heart: the names of men in the Department, some of them rivals of David's, some of them friends, some of them influential professors, some of them—she had lost the ability or the interest in being able to distinguish among them—famous economists in other parts of the world, some living, some dead, all part of the litany and therefore sacred, in a way, comic but sacred: *Reidenbaugh, Markham, Boltyanskii, Mischenko, Meyer, Stanton, Hicks, Slutzky, Pontyragin*. And on and on as others joined the conversation, David, Mick, Ed himself while chewing beef, mentioning names of colleagues the others had overlooked, whose prospects were or were not good, the members of a committee that . . . the man who had supervised the thesis by that young woman from New York, the surprise of the year . . . a woman named Elderman hired months ahead of time by, of all places . . . spoken lightly enough, though Corinne caught the envy, the amazed envy, of all places . . . Berkeley. *What wouldn't we give, to stay in the area!* Clara sighed, *even if it's only Berkeley!* What did she mean, Jill asked, *only* Berkeley? Jill's food lay on her plate, untouched; her dainty fork and knife were crossed over it; she was smoking a cigarette stuck in a transparent holder.

Corinne might have heard this discussion in the past, words and entire sentences struck her as familiar, agreeably familiar . . . or perhaps it was the wine . . . but she watched them all, glowing, pleased, smiling, chewing small mouthfuls of the delicious food, listening to her own interior voice, grown velvety now, as if sleepy with lust, *I love . . . I love . . . I love. . .* the words she believed she would never say to her lover, who did not believe in such things. Yet at the back of her mind he listened, he responded to them, he loved her in return, smiling at her . . . he liked her a little drunk, as she was now, her mind slightly blown, as he put it, so he didn't have to work so terribly hard . . . Jacob with his wheat-colored hair, dark blond, many shades of brown, streaked and grown untidy, his face shadowed and watchful and unjudging; waiting for her. He too had gone away for the weekend: he would be driving north, straight up Highway 5. Unless his car broke down again he'd be back on Monday. *But tell me where you'll be, so that I can think of you there*. Don't think of me, Jacob had said; forget me.

Quarter after five, and she had been showering, hurrying, her mind leaping ahead—forgetting her lover—to David, to the unpleasant drive over to his rooming house, darts of nagging worries, small vanities concerning her hair, which she

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regretted she had not washed the night before, the dark serviceable long-sleeved dress she supposed she must wear, since it was the only good dress that wasn't soiled or wrinkled . . . so she could loop over her neck the strands of imitation pearls that David liked so much, which did seem to transform any out-of-fashion dress she wore, exactly as her mother said pearls did; *pearls are always suitable*. . . . By a coincidence, Sutherland on her right leaned over to whisper, now drunk, that she looked very very charming tonight, very pretty, he loved pearls on women, especially women with her coloring . . . she reminded him of, of . . . and while he searched for the correct memory, his red-flecked eyes scanning hers as if she might aid him, she could not resist saying that certain ornaments and certain vestments gave one immense powers, almost of invisibility: one could commit murder, almost. He laughed, startled. He set down his wine glass and rubbed at his whiskers—really startled, but amused. The others glanced curiously at him and at Corinne. Corinne blushed, she had not meant really to say what she'd said, it was not in her nature to say such cheap things, but the remark was such a success . . . Sutherland's response to it so appreciative . . . that Clara asked, *What did Corinne say to you, Suthie*? But he waved her away, he was not going to repeat it, he was far too elegant for that. David smiled at her, a suspicious smile that became genuine; he had eaten well, he was pleased about something—perhaps the dour news about jobs, which did not personally affect him—he liked it that his wife was so pretty and so witty. . . . *What did you say to make Sutherland laugh like that? . . . Would you like to have him over for dinner, just the three of us? . . . You seemed to get along so well with him, he's so quirkish in his likes and dislikes*. . . . The mood around the table had swung abruptly, almost too abruptly, from gloom to hilarity, as if led by Sutherland, who had led them reluctantly into gloom a few minutes earlier; so, seeing that people were not going to ask her any more questions about her work in Tacoma, and her personal theories concerning the future of the underprivileged, Clara got to her feet, smiling, but heavier in her flesh, back to being a hostess again—maternal, asking if she might assume they all wanted coffee?—Irish coffee?—Expresso?—or—?—taking a kind of graceful revenge by asking them each in turn, around the table, in the crossfire of an exchange of good-natured jokes and puns and witticisms among the men. Sutherland was very slightly—just very slightly—anti-Semitic, and he was drunk enough to tell them a joke that concerned a Jewish Rhodes scholar, at Oxford, when Sutherland had been there . . . something about the chapel . . . misunderstanding of some kind. . . . But the point of the joke was lost in his own laughter; the others made no attempt to join. Jill's face darkened. Ah, she was Jewish!—Corinne thought, in a sudden heat of misery, not able to face her, but jumped to her feet to help Clara —might she help clear the table?—please?—Clara had so much to do, the dinner had been so delicious! Clara explained, airily, laughing, that she couldn't bear to have anyone assist her—not even Ed—it simply confused her all the more—she hoped Corinne understood. So Corinne sat back down again, rebuffed, settling into the currents of embarrassment awash at that level.

"Yes, and human beings have died because of that, over misunderstandings like that," Jill said shakily.

No one knew what she meant.

". . . Misunderstandings . . . religious jargon . . . transubstantiation . . . saviors, redeemers, the Old Testament wrenched *into* a context that totally violates it. . . . Imperialism, capitalism, *you* named it earlier . . . savages. . . . Sons of bitches," Jill said. But her voice was so low, strangled back in her throat, that they were able to pretend they hadn't heard it, not all of what she said. Her husband asked at once—in a voice that surprised Corinne, it was so automatic, almost cheerful—if she were tired, it had been a long day for her, hadn't it?—would she like to go home? She said nothing, not even looking at him. She shrugged her shoulders and reached out toward Ed, reaching for one of the wine bottles. *Oh sure—yes!—Jesus, just help yourself*—Ed's immense sweaty relief.

Yet the mood for joking had not been lost, and it was David who re-introduced it: an anecdote, really, not a joke, but very amusing, about a bizarre series of experiments in cognitive psychology, he'd come across the article in the browsing room of the undergraduate library, really he'd had better things to do but sometimes had to give his brain a rest . . . the crazy things their colleagues were doing these days, in psychology! It was time for an exposé, so much money for such crap. . . . Mick spoke of having participated in a Pavlovian experiment while an undergraduate at Yale, for the money, of course, he'd needed money, and he made it into a wry joke—the electric shocks, the buzzers, the torture— And, looking across at his wife, he smiled strangely; he pushed his glasses farther up his nose, pressing them against the bridge of his nose. Jill poured wine for herself and for David, flirtatiously. *David? David?—does anyone ever call you Davy? But why not?* Corinne did not know if she felt jealousy for that exchange, and for her husband's boyish smile, or whether it was guilt: a pang of sheer undifferentiated emotion. Of course he knew. He knew. Somehow he knew. How could he not know, when even his wife's gaiety excluded him?—her charitable flesh shivering coldly beneath his?

The dessert was lime pie, which all the men seemed to like, with a cocoa crust that even Jill had to comment on, *How interesting! how unusual!* Her husband was from Iowa, an absurd and ghastly state, she said, but she was from—where did they think? They couldn't guess? —She had been born in Paris, her father had been stationed there, he'd been with the diplomatic corps—yes, Paris—yes, but unfortunately they had returned to the United States and back to the Los Angeles area, where—and here she hesitated, her lipsticked smile suddenly concerned for what she was saying—having lost the thread of what she meant to say—then she remembered, she emphasized the importance her mother had always placed upon good baking, good crusts, *especially crusts*, which were—in her mother's quaint phrase, or was it quaint?—ha, she didn't know!—which were the dividing line between a girl and a woman, the Hallmark of Distinction, words to that effect. Jill giggled, shaking her curtain of dark hair from side to side; it was impossible to determine whether she was being serious, addressing Clara quite seriously, or so malicious that the evening would have to be ended at this point. Clara chose to interpret her remarks as laudatory, and shrugged them off, saying that both she and Ed enjoyed cooking: men enjoyed cooking, really; had Ed mentioned the bread he'd baked off and on that summer . . .? Yes. Good wholemeal bread, really delicious. . . . Jill didn't catch this; if a rebuff had been intended it was lost on her; she was leaning toward David now,

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whispering, her hand on his arm. It was turned so that the palm showed, and the palm was pink-skinned; the rest of her was tanned. She looked, at first glance, aggressively healthy, and, except for the lipstick that had begun to fleck off, really a striking woman—then, if one looked more closely, even with sympathy, there was something dried-out about her, the skin close up revealed to be criss-crossed with innumerable tiny lines, wrinkles on the very surface of her skin, though she was no more than Corinne's age—in her mid-twenties. Over coffee more anecdotes surfaced, one of which—concerning Clara's adventures as a potter's apprentice—Corinne had heard before, so she allowed her mind to drift, cast free, sensing that the evening would be ending soon and there would be no disaster, no real dramatic event, none at all, just as in life there were very few such events . . . reminded by Clara's clever, self-mocking story of the fact that Clara had painted the canvases in the other room, one of which she could see from where she sat: it covered most of the wall above the sofa, unframed, an abstract running-together of muted colors, deliberately unspectacular in color and design and execution, beige, gray, brown . . . off-white . . . no blacks, no primary colors, nothing to really draw the eye to it. Was that painting of any value at all? . . . Corinne had no way of knowing . . . she had no way of knowing. It had passed beyond her, beyond most people: that kind of art. Jacob said it was élitist art: but he sympathized with it. He was not élitist himself, he had said . . . speaking of himself carelessly, not really wanting to develop the subject . . . but he wasn't an artist any longer; perhaps he had given up, out of a hatred for painting that way, for being unable to paint any other way. . . . Corinne remembered Clara's having mentioned, embarrassed, the first time she and David had been invited over, how curious it was that art supplies, like her big canvases, were so expensive in the shops and so worthless once they were changed into "art" . . . so utterly, comically worthless . . . except for the twenty or thirty "artists" in the United States, whose work was of course valuable indeed. But there had been no envy to Clara's remark; she had seemed to be making a simple economic pronouncement they might find amusing. . . . Clara was still talking, perhaps at too great a length; she sensed her listeners getting restless; wisely, she asked them to go back into the other room, it was more pleasant there, she'd clear the table and—Ed?—Ed would serve them brandy if they wanted it— Ah yes! Brandy! Sutherland rose from the table, as if with new vitality, helping Corinne with her chair—asking over her head if they had that very interesting nutty-tasting liqueur they had served him last time, any more of that left?—and Corinne felt her husband's pang, at this casual reference to a party or an evening the Andersches evidently had not been invited to—*What was it, a Portuguese brandy*? Jill rose unsteadily, David pulled her chair back for her, as automatically courteous with his friend's wife as he was with his own, Jill stretched her arms, shook her head as if very sleepy, but pleased, and asked Clara in an intimate drawl if she would do *just one favor for them . . .*?

There was a fan or something in the kitchen, a motor or something out there, wasn't there?—over the stove, maybe?—probably? Would Clara please turn that off, would she mind?—because if there was one thing that freaked her out, Jill confessed, it was goddam fucking motors, for instance helicopters going by all the time, back and forth—did anyone notice that?—right here in Palo Alto—were they surveying the city, taking photographs, or what? She had really been freaked out, she told them, by a rattling air-conditioner in a restaurant in Los Angeles. Right overhead. Rattling, wheezing, blasting cold air down her back. Freaked out, really. Did anyone else feel the same way?

Surprisingly, Sutherland joined forces with her—he was drunk enough to almost reach over toward her, swaying, his muttonchop whiskers bristling, Yes, my God yes, you have said it!—you have said it! And he very much approved of her vocabulary, he couldn't keep up with current slang—the boys—that is, the young people—changed their code all the time, diabolical, they were, continuously shifting and changing their words, their costumes, their entire life-styles—but he liked that expression *Freaked out*, he did indeed.

Freaked out, freaked out, freaked out.

He murmured the words, as if tasting an exquisite, subtle liqueur.

Jill laughed. "You can also say *freaked*. Just that, just that word without the *out*. As in, *I freaked*; as in *I freaked when they set the electrodes in place*; as in, uh, *I freaked when I failed to freak*." She walked with Sutherland to the other room; she slid her arm through his, her dusky skin and pink dress vivid against his off-white outfit, the two of them giggling, *Did you ever fail to freak? Oh I bet you never did! You?—Never!* This cleared Corinne's head; she and David looked at each other, bleakly. That moment when things seem to have changed, and at once it is time to escape. . . . And Mick, lighting another cigarette, pretending to be drunker than he really was, cast a sideways glance at his host, as if in reference to a secret between them, *You see . . .? You see . . .*? But Clara had turned off the fan above the stove and reappeared with a tray of short squat handsome bottles; it was obvious to Corinne, though she dreaded such discoveries, that the Dixons did have money, money from somewhere, and that the several times she and David had entertained them must have been disappointing to them . . . inexpensive California wine, ordinary coffee, no after-dinner drinks at all. Ah yes. She was vulnerable yet, vulnerable that way: imagining the Dixons' droll comments afterward, Ed's shoulder-shrugging *Well little Corinne does try hard*.

Ed poured drinks for everyone, even for Corinne, who halfway protested, but accepted a drink anyway in a tiny liqueur glass, brandy that smelled to her like cleaning fluid . . . finding herself in a totally new arrangement, now, by having sat on the rug, her skirt modestly gathered about her, docile, sweet, ready to listen . . . looking up to where Clara sat in the black-lacquer chair shaped like a tub, Clara now flush-faced, having served them dinner and having eased them back into this area of the apartment, not yet ready to relinquish them to the night, but clearly past the point of her most strenuous concern for them. She was really a very nice woman. Corinne kept discovering that, and forgetting it, and rediscovering it; it occurred to her that since leaving Baton Rouge she had not made any friends, any women friends at all. Far easier to seduce a man, any man, she thought as she inhaled those poisonous fumes, easier even to have gotten married . . . there seemed a barrier between women of her age, out here, or perhaps it was her own self-consciousness that prevented friendship . . . she had tried hard, she had tried hard, but the young woman in Business English whose hair hung down her back and who wore capes and hats and wide leather belts was

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always in a rush, and Irene Madsen, who had made, Corinne believed, a few tentative gestures toward befriending Corinne, had somehow disappeared, too busy, as everyone at Monte Vista was too busy: even eating lunch was a contest of a kind, cramming so much excitement, so many spasmodic snatches of conversation, into forty-five minutes . . . she envied her girl students, whose friendships were so real, created by what was almost a biological drive . . . giggling together, combing their hair over the basins where hair-combing was forbidden, striding along the corridors, some of them possessing a remarkable physical maturity . . .

. . . As if to offset the hilarity of Jill and Sutherland, who were exchanging comic-grotesque anecdotes about motors and barking dogs and sirens, squashed together at one end of the sofa, Clara was addressing Corinne and whoever else was listening in a friendly, kindly, frank way, admitting to a few moments of panic out in the kitchen . . . *My mother is the same way*, she said . . . wondering if the beef was overdone? . . . no? . . . then she could forget about it: good! Clara's hair was brown, pulled back from her face and tied with a dark green scarf; a gray hair or two glinted in the lamplight; there were fine wrinkles at the corners of her eyes, deepening and relaxing as she spoke. . . . Very real, she seemed; entirely natural. She was speaking of the competitive atmosphere of Palo Alto . . . not, she said hastily, among people they knew . . . but among so-called artists, who were very clique-ish, very snobbish. She held a tiny glass of creme de menthe between her palms, and something in that gesture, its pointless delicacy, its grace, made Corinne think suddenly of her lover . . . not the idea of him, which was always with her now, but the fact of him: a man who made love to her, now driving up along Highway 5, alone, while she was sitting at someone's feet, alone, lost, tired and exhilarated, hundreds of miles away from him. She seemed to swerve toward him, in a dream-flash, closing her eyes upon an overwhelming sensation of giddiness, unreality . . . she had to hold herself rigid in order to prevent crying out for him, for *him,* for no one else. How vicious she knew herself, how greedy, how impatient for him! . . . as if anything else mattered, her compulsive sweetness, her triple strand of pearls, her docility in the face of Mrs. Dixon's superior femininity. . . . She wanted him, only him. She wanted him very badly. . . . While the others talked she sat there, motionless, her eyes half-closed, dreaming, brooding, remembering, giving herself up to him in her imagination, unjarred even by someone's noisy laugh . . . someone's witticisms . . . Mick saying *Excuse me*, reaching for one of the bottles on the table in front of her . . . a long droning detail-laden anecdote told by Ed . . . all at a distance from her, unrelated to her. She thought of Jacob and his solitary life; she thought of how solitary the two of them would be, together. . . . Dizzily she wondered what time it was, whether she might ask David to leave soon . . . ah, how she looked forward to going to bed, to sleep! . . . after the strain of these hours at the Dixons she and David would fall into bed, exhausted, not needing to talk, certainly not needing to love or to perform the ritual motions of love, not tonight, and when her husband fell asleep she would be freed, she would lie there utterly free of everyone, and think of her lover, of her lover, as she did every night, an impersonal despair so deep in her body that it excluded her imagination entirely and was almost a pleasure to her: to feel Jacob as an absence, an empty space in her, waiting to be filled. . . . Then she was nudged from her reverie by a sharp comment from Mick, concerning trouble he was evidently having in locating certain materials needed for his dissertation study, *like a conspiracy against me, sometimes it seems that way*, and she seemed to be waking to a group of people she had forgotten, who had continued to talk and to drink in her absence; she opened her eyes to see Ed gazing at her, staring at her from a few feet away, as if he were about to plunge into her . . . silent, bemused, his bumpy face pale and slack from drinking . . . really staring at her, as if he were sharing her thoughts, as if he were the lover prepared to fill that space. Seeing her return his look he blinked, he and Corinne both looked away, startled; Corinne felt her face grow warm; she re-settled herself, gathering her skirt close around her legs, ashamed, confused. Surely she must be intoxicated. She did not know what was happening. . . . Jill Busch was silent now, slouched, one leg extended so that her skirt was pulled to mid-thigh, beside her Sutherland looked sleepy, pleased, puffy-eyed, obviously day-dreaming and paying no attention to, who was it speaking, Mick or David, David or Mick, going through the central points of a lengthy essay in *U.S. News & World Report* written by Professor Meyer in order to refute the Administration's policy-maker's latest absurd proposal. . . . Then Clara asked Corinne, suddenly, how well she believed she had adjusted to the West Coast?—she was from Louisiana, wasn't she?—and Corinne had no idea of the truth of her adjustment or failure to adjust, and could not even remember where she was—not in Berkeley, not in Monte Vista, but here in the garden apartment of the Dixons whom she hardly knew. She said, stammering, that she liked it very much. She liked it here, very much. Yes. She was very happy here . . . very happy. . . .

Was that true, David wanted to know, was it really true? . . . he doubted it. He didn't elaborate. Sutherland yawned; he said, while yawning, that *he* liked Palo Alto, but detested the rest of the area, except of course The City . . . though the restaurants disappointed him, frankly. He missed London. He missed weekend trips to London. . . . Clara said, as if pursuing Corinne, as if she had noticed her husband staring at Corinne, that the first time they'd met Corinne had mentioned how hard it was to meet people here, to make friends, how lonely people seemed to be . . . did she still feel that way? Was it a lonely area, did she still think so? Feeling trapped and resentful, Corinne said that her work kept her so busy, now, five days a week, she no longer had any time to brood about such matters; and, of course, she and David were here only temporarily . . . as soon as David finished his degree he intended to get a position in the East. . . . If this was a betrayal of her husband's confidence he did not protest; he too looked sleepy, pouchy-eyed, his usually neat hair falling across his forehead. *Ah, back East! Then you don't like it here*! Well, it was difficult to become close friends with anyone, out here; Mick volunteered this, sadly. Everyone was . . . everyone was headed somewhere else. Everyone was from somewhere else. It was all temporary. It was like . . . it was like being at the edge of something. Corinne dreaded someone joking about the San Andreas fault: it would be Jill. But Jill seemed rather silent now, her head drooping. . . . Sutherland said philosophically that it was rather like this in London, he believed; and in New York City. However . . . he had to admit that in some ways it was unique, the West Coast was unique, there was a feeling he couldn't quite determine . . . of transparency, of acceleration and

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obsolescence . . . for instance, did they know he was only thirty-four? . . . and yet he felt much older, Jesus Christ, he looked and behaved much, much older . . . perhaps time had accelerated out here and he was really, what, fifty-four? Oh God!—moaning in mock terror. But Clara was not drawn away into the frailty of surrealistic humor; she said, sipping at her drink, that she and Ed had been here six years, six long years, a lifetime, "and in utter honesty I must admit that . . . well . . . we don't really have any close friends . . . I mean . . . you know what I mean," she said, as if anticipating Ed's protest, though in fact he had said nothing at all. . . . And, of course, she had to admit that they were always very busy; there wasn't much time to cultivate people; people were always clearing out, packing their Volkswagen buses and disappearing, driving across the continent back in the direction they'd come from . . . that enormous American continent, which she had never crossed except by plane. And how unreal, to cross it by plane! She spoke of people like herself and Ed and the rest of them as pioneers, *pioneers, weren't they?*—living different lives, experimenting with different ways of living? No one answered, so she said, less emphatically, that she did like it here, very much, she could survive here as well as anyone else. And the oddest thing, she had received a letter from her mother yesterday . . . a lengthy letter, filled with news, friendly, chatty, but so foreign to the way she and Ed lived that it seemed, truly, a missive from another time, from another species.

"They are," Ed laughed. "Our parents, they are another species."

"Yes, yes," Mick said, "they are . . . that's right. That's right."

Gaily, Clara went on to explain that the occasion for this particular letter had been her parents' 30th wedding anniversary. Amazing, depressing, hilarious . . . thirty years . . . and thirty years not just of marriage but of having accumulated so many friends . . . *so many friends*! Though they had lived in Tacoma for the past eighteen years, they still had friends back in Nebraska, and so what did they do but invite the old friends as well as the new friends . . . and the Nebraska couples chartered a plane and actually flew out, all the way to the Tacoma Golf Club for an anniversary party! Wasn't it amazing, wasn't it . . . wasn't it material for an anthropological study, really? Incredible, over two hundred people had showed up for the party, all friends, first-name-basis, Christmas-card, wedding-invitation friends, pages and pages of names that meant absolutely nothing to Clara, who had always disliked her parents' friends anyway . . . ah God, even the names of these strangers' children, details about infants that had died thirty years ago, even naming names . . . mentioning a school-bus accident, a "tragedy", that had taken place in Lincoln twenty-five years ago . . . these shared memories, shared friendships, how could her mother have written such a letter and sent it off to Clara and Ed, twelve handwritten pages of it . . .? Amazing, it was amazing, depressing, hilarious.

. . . God, Ed moaned, it was certainly a chatty letter.

Why did she imagine I cared about those people?—Clara asked, almost angrily. Why, why on earth? Why? She had wanted us to fly back for the party, but of course we managed to avoid it . . . imagine, two hundred middle-aged people at the country club, dancing all night long. . . . No thank you. No thank you. I explained over the telephone that Ed was far too busy. . . .

Corinne said that to her the party had sounded rather nice; what was wrong with it . . .? Her voice had a drunken whine to it, horrible. She paused, unable to continue; she had wanted to ask them who would come to their parties, their thirtieth-anniversary parties, who would show up to help *them* celebrate?

Mick said they were certainly a different species; his parents were the same way, exactly the same. Davenport, Iowa. That summed them up entirely.

The conversation shifted to scornful talk of Los Angeles.

Corinne looked over at David, hoping to catch his eye. They must leave. They must escape. . . . But he was contributing to the new topic, his mouth grim and merry . . . he knew someone who knew someone who knew. . . . Whatever he would say would evoke a familiar kind of laughter. What harsh, loveless, combative brothers these men were! And yet they wanted, wanted desperately, to affirm some common bond. Corinne knew it, she sensed it, sensed in the men a longing as deep as her own for a friendship between herself and another woman, or herself and another man, as equals, in these witty pale old-young men there was passion beyond any they had yet discovered . . . and the bond was there, it was sunk inside them, in nature; it was within reach. But where was it . . .? What was it . . .? How unfortunate, that these four men were confined within the imaginations of other, older men, older "rivals" in the guise of being superiors; guides, models, fathers . . . unfatherly fathers, totally unpredictable. They had power over the younger men, but they possessed no paternal awareness of them, no sense of them at all. Transcendent gods. Unreachable, unknowable. Meyer with his eccentric whims. . . Professor Dauwen Meyer, world-famous economist, expert, advisor, consultant. . . . And the litany of names, the tired dead litany of men's names, always men, men, men and their names, a string of men's names going back through the centuries, the living yoked to the dead, trapped. And so, when the young, living sons spoke, even of their gods, there was always that sourish querulous note, as if they knew very well, ahead of time, that they would be betrayed. Of course. Crucified: of course. They sensed the boxed-in ironies of their lives, they hardly dared to have children, knowing themselves not yet accepted into adulthood . . . slipping toward the edge, not yet

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placed in the economic void; only sons. *Yes, we were poor too. Yes, we are poor, always.* . . . And so they cultivated a special language, a way of speaking that was "liberal" and yet cynical, good-naturedly cynical, even morbid, always ironic. They cast their innocence from them in handfuls, vexed by it, ashamed of it, eager to be old and cynical and wise. . . . Now they were comparing someone Corinne had never heard of with someone else she'd never heard of. Dispassionate, but relentless. The world was divided into successes and failures. Hear her own husband talk, listing a stranger's accomplishments and measuring them against another stranger's accomplishments! . . . and Mick Busch weighing everything against the *minus-factors*! Though they were near to being pushed off the edge, themselves, in spite of being young geniuses, though they were haunted by the prospect of their own failure, they did believe . . . truly, they did believe . . . in their own superiority. Were they not superior, since so many people had told them so? College entrance exams, I.Q. scores, undergraduate grades, graduate performance. . . ? Superior. Of course. If not they, then who? Someone must be superior, someone must win! . . . Yet they seemed always querulous, searching, even alcohol did not quiet them. What was it, what did they want? They talked around it, ceaselessly, alluding to a scale of being that ranged into Godliness, a complex network of human relationships that must include them, *must* include them, since they were so servile to it.

Yet as the conversation slipped away from him—someone introduced a more amusing subject—David's expression lost its hardness, he blinked as if, like Corinne, he were waking to a group of people he had forgotten, and whose souls were not in his possession; she felt in that moment of his vulnerability a pang of emotion for him, whether love or friendship she did not know, and something wifely in her sympathized with him—*why* would not people listen to him, forever?—*why* would not everyone love him as his mother had evidently failed to love him—forever, forever? She regretted not having brought over from Monte Vista a certain slate-blue shirt of his, of a somewhat heavier material than the one he was wearing . . . a present to him from her, last winter, a handsome shirt he had always liked; now the weather was chilly enough, now it was nearly what would be "winter" in this part of the world. . . . David had been speaking, evidently, about expenditures on the space program and on aeronautical engineering in general, but the others were now making a joke of it: Ed, on his feet, bearish and clowning, Jill giggling, *How convenient, to discover a big open black hole to fly people into!—when the crowding gets too awful*! She jabbed Sutherland in the ribs, waking him from a dreamy trance, and asked him what he thought: *Better than box-cars, eh? Solve all your problems*! Mick reached over to tap his wife's knee, he asked how she'd like to start out for home . . .? *Oh Christ!* Jill said, looking at him as if she'd forgotten him until now, *you mean walk . . .? Walk all the way to that dump?* Mick asked her what did she mean, walk? Why walk? They had a car, didn't they? She stared at him blankly. . . . David said, addressing Ed and Clara and Corinne, who were all he might hope for, that the space program was important and would have to be funded, though it drained money away from other—*No, no, what a waste*! Clara interrupted drunkenly—*slums and famines and*— Hey, did they know what some of those experiments involved? Ed asked. Travel by the mind. Not in the rocket—but *by the mind*. He shook his large head, baffled, amused, hovering over Corinne. He reached for another bottle, *Excuse me, honey*, he murmured, then sat down heavily beside her, grunting, and Jill cried out that it was *astro-travel* he meant, travelling outside your body—wasn't that what he meant?—she thought that was the freakiest fanciest thing she'd ever heard of. She asked if anyone had ever done it: travel outside his body. Any of them, here, tonight.

. . . To tone down her hilarity Mick said something about the necessity for having a universe, some kind of a universe, some *place*, if not to send people into . . . what if they didn't care to go? . . . *it would be just like them*! Ed laughed . . . but to think about, at least. Ed leaned over to mutter into Corinne's ear something about *Wouldn't it be just like them?—recalcitrant bastards*! She eased herself away from him, awkwardly. She had been sitting with one hand pressed against the rug and the tough fibres had left marks on her skin. Travel outside your body! Travel by way of the soul! Jill repeated that it was the *freak*iest thing she had ever heard of and . . . and . . . and she was convinced, she wasn't lying now, she was sober, she was convinced that she'd experienced it herself, once. But only once. . . . However, no one questioned her about it. Someone asked whether they'd read that hideous news-item in the paper about the bodies unearthed outside Merced?—the partly-decomposed bodies of girls and boys in their late teens?—it was all connected, evidently, with some kind of a ring, an underground ring—but the police weren't sure. The point was: occult ceremonies, burying trinkets, and braided ropes and feathers, maniacs, weren't they? . . . who were they? . . . or was it one person? . . . One general type, Ed said emphatically. The murderer is one general type. . . . Jill asked if anyone knew any murderers? . . . *She* did. *She* had. . . . And he'd been the nicest man, so polite and handsome and just a little too quiet, he'd lived a few doors down from them, from her parents, when she was in high school . . . he had worked in a shoe store and taught Sunday School, would you believe it? . . . always such a surprise! . . . And when she worked for *Four Seasons Services* in L.A., some maniac had come around looking for someone, with a revolver not even hidden very well in his coat pocket, and—*Four Seasons*! Did you work for them—*that*?—Ed asked, genuinely surprised. There was a long silence. Mick said angrily that she had not worked for them—she was just drunk, just making a fool of herself. Jill sat forward, seemed about to refute him, then paused; her eyelids had been encrusted with a thick beige cream and they drooped now, wearily, perhaps fearfully. Mick said that it had been Jill's room-mate who worked there; that Jill got things confused in her mind these days, and appropriated other people's experiences and adventures, and pretended they were her own. Wasn't that so? . . . Jill wiped at her nose, as if she were alone. She said nothing. . . . After a pause, Corinne said innocently that she didn't think that outfit was so terribly bad . . . wasn't it a legitimate escort-agency, that supplied girls or even men for people who were lonely or new in town . . . and wasn't it the one that rented out girls to picket or march in demonstrations . . . ? She didn't think it was so terribly bad, why was it . . . so terribly bad . . .? she asked faintly. David glanced at her, irritated. But she had to continue, she had to explain herself, however badly it might sound: when she had first arrived in San Francisco she had roomed with a cousin of hers, a girl a few years older than herself, Annette, Annette McCullogh, and

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Annette had been associated with the Bay area branch of the *Four Seasons* . . . well, Corinne said, blushing, well, she had been desperate for a job! . . . for something to do! . . . and she was such a pretty girl, so popular back in high school, and . . . and it's difficult to surrender that, that popularity, being so admired by. . . . *And so what happened*? Clara asked. *What happened*? Corinne had moved in with her at about the time she had decided to quit the agency, because she had . . . she wanted . . . she had wanted, Corinne said, wondering why on earth she'd begun this wretched story, and yet unable to end it, she had wanted to be on her own . . . to be independent . . . to. . . . No one spoke. Even Jill, snuffling, only stared at Corinne in silence. And . . . and. . . .

"Corinne," David said suddenly, "none of that is true, is it? You've never told me about any cousin of yours, you've never. . . . What is this?"

"My cousin Annette," Corinne said stubbornly. "Of course I've mentioned Annette. . . . I didn't tell you what happened to her, why should I have told you? . . . I had to go testify at court a few days after we were married, but I didn't tell you about it, because . . . because . . . it's such an ugly story, I didn't want you to know."

David laughed angrily. "I really don't believe you."

". . . What happened to her?" Clara asked.

"She had worked for *Four Seasons* and she liked it well enough, it was very easy . . . she wasn't bothered by any of the men, she claimed not to be, and the agency is evidently, or was, evidently very strict with the people who are filed there, and its clientele . . . they're fingerprinted and. . . ."

"Fingerprinted!" David said, in a kind of laughing incredulous shriek, "You're making this up, really. Aren't you—really?"

"The agencies are like that, some of them," Clara told him. She laughed. "Don't you read the papers? It's in all the papers—things like this—"

"Corinne, I don't remember any cousin of yours—in San Francisco?—when? I never met any cousin of yours," David said. "You were all alone out here."

". . . I just arrived in time for the fall semester to begin, and . . . and . . ." Corinne said, on the verge of tears or of uncontrollable laughter, so conscious of herself in everyone's eyes that she seemed viciously illuminated by light, a spotlight that revealed every pore in her face, every miserable nuance in her voice, yet she could not stop: ". . . and everyone had believed, back home, that Annette was taking courses in night-school and working as a secretary, and, well, I didn't know what her life consisted of . . . I was very naive . . ." Here Ed laughed, delighted, *Oh were you? Little Corinne from Louisiana*! ". . . what was strange about her was that she had become so very Southern," Corinne said, trying to smile, trying to wrench these painful minutes of her life into something amusing, perhaps one of the many anecdotes recited that evening, only to amuse, ". . . she was so fluttery, her accent was so pronounced, I almost couldn't understand her . . . and she looked different. . . . She was a very nice girl," Corinne said.

"Corinne, you're drunk," David said lightly.

"She was . . . she is a very nice girl," Corinne said. She was blinking rapidly, trying not to cry. Somehow everything had gone wrong. Everything had gone wrong. ". . . I realized there was something strange when, when I saw a photograph of her with a group of other girls, and they were dressed as drum majorettes, twirling batons, they had been hired by some man to promote a television program, I think, or a new car. . . . So she explained to me what it was, she was very embarrassed, she begged me not to tell anyone back home . . . and . . . and I had just begun classes at the university, I was so busy and worried . . . and of course I didn't approve of what Annette was doing but I didn't exactly know what it was, it all seemed so mysterious, and she said she was quitting anyway . . . and toward the end I never saw her, she stayed away from the apartment for days at a time, and if we met she was so embarrassed and irritable, because she hated me being there, she hated me not approving and she was convinced I'd tell my mother about her. And so. . . ."

"She was killed, wasn't she," Jill said flatly.

"No, not killed," Corinne said. She had begun to cry. A few yards away her husband stared at her, pale around the mouth, yet ready to smirk and to refute her. *How had it happened, her telling them this story*! She felt it as one of the most egregious and unnecessary blunders of her life. "I came back from school one day and . . . and . . . She had been beaten quite badly, she'd been beaten. That's all. I don't have anything more to say."

"When did this happen?" David asked.

"I don't know, please, I don't have anything more to say."

"What hearing? You testified—when? A few days after we were married, how did you manage that?—I don't believe any of this," David said. He looked around. He laughed. "Really, she's drunk. She can't drink. Two glasses of wine and she's out of her head . . . you know better than to drink so much, honey, don't you? Ed, take that glass away from her before—"

Ed laughed and snatched it away.

"I'm not drunk," Corinne said. "There's nothing wrong with me."

"I've never heard you talk so much, or so pointlessly," David said. "You must be drunk. Come on, we should leave . . . we should have left a half-hour ago."

"I'm not drunk," Corinne said.

"Don't leave, David, don't break the party up," Sutherland said. "It isn't late, is it? It isn't late."

David got to his feet and helped Corinne up. She did feel dizzy, her face no longer warm; touching it, she was surprised to feel that the tip of her nose seemed cold. David gripped her by the shoulders and shook her awake. Behind him Jill muttered something about *She better not contradict him, he can have her, you know, zonked for it*, then, rising, Jill said loudly, "Don't argue with him! What's-your-name! Don't argue with him and don't cry and don't scream or freak out because they're waiting for that—hey—that's exactly what they're waiting for—and then—then—"

But David was helping her walk away, though she didn't require any help; and in the hallway Ed, swaying, now solemn, fished their trench coats out of the closet and mumbled something about wishing they wouldn't leave, it wasn't late. . . . "It's late enough," David said, cheerfully, "and Corinne put in a full day's teaching today, didn't you, honey?"

Corinne thanked Ed and called back to Clara that she had loved the party— Clara heaved herself out of the chair, evidently quite drunk, and protested, they mustn't leave yet—it wasn't late, was it?

It wasn't late, was it? □

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Henry Africa's

A STORY BY KAREN LOEB

Dory and I walk into Henry Africa's and it's crowded and people at the bar are singing and I say, we're just going to have one drink because you know what happens when I have more. And she puts her arm through mine and squeezes it a little and says, listen Marnie, this is our last night here and I want to meet a guy.

We sit down at a long wooden table and right away I notice that this is like no other bar I've ever been to. It's bright inside, and there are hundreds of plants all around—hanging from the ceiling and on the floor. The area away from the bar has all different kinds of tables, and couches and easy chairs. It really feels pleasant, sort of like yesterday when I went with my aunt to the Japanese tea garden in Golden Gate Park.

I look over at Dory and her nipples are arching against her sweater, and she's got her legs crossed high, and she suddenly says, let's move over there quick, and before I realize it we're sitting in two lounge chairs with a little marble table in between and the waitress has just taken our order for Irish coffee and I curl up in the chair and I'm about to say something to Dory, something stupid like isn't this an interesting place or I wonder what kind of plant that is, but I can't because she's watching a table about two feet away with several men and I could light a match by her eyes and she wouldn't move away she's so involved in looking at them, and I chuckle and want to say, why don't you be a little obvious or something and I realize that this is going to be an interesting night. I start playing the game of I wonder which one she wants. She'll tell me for sure in a few minutes when she'll just happen to suggest we go to the bathroom, and she'll talk about the odds of this one as opposed to that one, and which one do I think would go in for the weird stuff, because, she'll say, you know I don't want any of that, just a good lay to make me think this trip to San Francisco has been worth it.

Why she thinks of me as an expert on who'll be good for a night in bed I don't know. But she's always asking me my opinion of what I think a man will be like. Well, I usually say, you know I've been seeing Art for three years so it's kind of hard for me to evaluate things. And she usually responds with, yeah, but before that . . . and I say but that was a long time ago, and Art and I have it good. If it hadn't been for his business trip, he probably would have come here with me.

Dory winks at me, and I'm sipping my Irish coffee through the whipped cream, getting a sinking feeling because they only cost fifty cents and at that price I know I'm going to drink more than one, which means I'll get drunk and Dory isn't exactly a person to depend on.

She leans towards me and points to a man in a paisley shirt who glances at her, working his eyes over her slowly. *He's eye-fucking you,* I want to say, but I don't. Well, what do you think of him, she says. Weird, he's definitely weird, I tell her. You think so . . . she asks. I shrug. So she doesn't believe me. Well, I really had no idea when I told her. I said it to say something.

She raises her skirt a little higher, and the waitress comes over and gives her another drink and says that a man at the next table would like her to join him. She smiles and says to me, do you mind and I say, no, but I'll just sit here. I watch her ass wiggle away, and I'm really happy I only wore blue jeans and a shirt instead of the Indian print dress with the low front that she almost talked me into wearing. This is her night—she had let me know that she thought her decision to stay with me at my aunt's house was a huge mistake—and I'll even have to fabricate some kind of excuse for her if I go home alone because Aunt Sylvia will be curious and will be shocked if I tell her the truth.

All of a sudden she's standing up and signaling me to follow her, and I do, reluctantly, because I'm comfortable and getting high and we walk the length of the room and up some steps to the washroom and I watch as men stare at her as we walk. When we get inside she says, well what do you think of him? I already told you, I say; you know, I said he was into weird stuff. Oh Marnie, not that one she says; no the other one, the one with the checked shirt; he's the one. What do you think of him? I think to myself, you're a pretty fast operator, and I smile and say aloud that I once made it with a man who wore a checked shirt, and he was pretty good, pretty damn good, and she purses her lips at me and gives me a slight push on the shoulder and says, oh, go to hell, now tell me really, what do you think? I know she wants me to tell her he's ok; she's already made her decision and she just wants a seal of approval so to speak, a kind of guarantee that he'll be good or she'll get some kind of refund. Well, if it's the one I think it is, he's good looking, I say tentatively, watching to see if that will do. She smiles. It was the right thing to say. You think so . . . I think he is too. And she fluffs up the curls on her head and squirts some more perfume on and says, let's go.

We go out and down the steps, and she says, oh, since you'll probably be going home first and your aunt will still be awake, let me take the key. I search around for the key in my pocket. It's got a little plastic poodle attached, a constant reminder of Aunt Sylvia. She takes it and swings it around a minute and then says, you're not mad, are you? Nope, I say; you have fun, but be careful and phone for godsake if things get rough.

KAREN LOEB writes from the MFA Workshop of Bowling Green University.

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She prances off, and I go back to my drink, and she talks to the man in the checked shirt and he stands up and he's tall and for one wild second he reminds me of Art, and I wonder what exactly Art is doing at this very minute. He could be sitting in a bar somewhere in New York, and maybe, if he meets a woman . . . I finish the rest of my drink and order another and a man comes over and sits down at my table, and he's paying the waitress for his drink, and when I take out my money for mine, he says oh, I just paid for it. And I happen to notice that Dory is just walking toward the exit, and she turns for an instant and waves. The man at my table smiles at me; his hair is red and he's about five nine. He's looking at me with a look that I haven't seen in quite a while—a look that says, I'm interested in you, woman, and how about it? I smile back, wanting to buy time, because I didn't count on this.

I have to evaluate the situation but I'm lousy in a panic. He's talking, telling me about some trivial incident that's just happened at his table, and he's reaching over and touching my fingers as he's talking, watching my reaction to that, and I start drinking faster than usual, and then remember that that's the worst thing I could do because I should keep clear-headed, but before I know it there's another Irish coffee in its place and he's asking me my name. I tell him and he says it's pretty, and even though I think he just says it to make pleasant conversation, I can't help being a little flattered. What's yours? I say. Carl. We smile at each other, and I look past him for a second and out the window, and I see Dory walking by, *alone*. I blink my eyes, not understanding, and I think maybe she'll come in, but for some reason she doesn't, and Carl asks what's distracting me, and I tell him and he says, yeah, he saw the whole pick-up from his table. I'm confused about why Dory is alone, but I figure I'll have to wait till I get home to find out what's happened.

I feel uncomfortable for a moment, like something's expected of me and I can't deliver, and Carl is telling me what a nice night it is out there. Well I've still got this whole drink, I point out, and then say, what do you do for a living? just to make conversation, because I hate that question. He looks down at his glass, and twists it around for a minute and looks up and laughs, a little embarrassed. You won't believe it, he says. No, what? I ask, curious. Well, he says, I play cards for money.

It's the last thing I expect him to come up with. I think of Art and his job as company lawyer, and they're probably around the same age—thirty—and I wonder what Art would think about his woman going out with a card shark.

Well, Carl says, at least if you won't check out the great night with me, you'll let me drive you home. He's got me. What could the harm be in that, I think. He's already mentioned he lives near Golden Gate Park, and that's the area where I'm staying, so I say ok, and he smiles and I get a slight uneasy feeling that somehow I've said ok to more than just a drive home, but I don't quite know how I've done it.

We walk out, and his arm is around me, and we go down Geary Street and around the corner to where his jeep is parked. He opens the door for me, which Art stopped doing about a week after I met him, and before I get in, he kisses me first on the forehead, and then, slowly, on the lips, and when I don't back away he kisses harder and I touch his side and run my hand around to his back, and I think, decisions aren't so difficult after all.

He tells me that he wants to stop by his apartment for a second to walk the dog, she'll be going crazy, is that ok? All right, I say, fidgeting a little, wondering if he does live near Golden Gate Park; maybe he's a maniac or something, and I wonder what it is I'm trying to prove, and I wish Art were around and I could give him a call and it would all be over. But then I figure, I've already made the choice, and if he's going to murder me or something he's going to do it—I'm in his clutches—but chances are he's not going to, so maybe I should just see what happens and go with that.

The neighborhood does look familiar, and we park in front of a white stucco building with arches and he says, this is it. We get out and walk in the door and he takes my hand as we walk up a flight of stairs. A dog is barking and he opens the door and a huge white Afghan jumps on him. We walk in, and he snaps on the light and he says, hey, let me walk her for a second, and I'll be back and we'll have a drink.

I wait, thumbing through a magazine, trying to read it but I can't, and I hear the dog barking outside from a distance. I look around; there's a whole wall of books and that surprises me. I start looking at them and I notice one from the publishing company where I work back in Chicago.

Finally Carl returns. He's left the dog in the hallway, which he tells me is where she likes to sleep. I follow him into the kitchen which has dishes scattered on counters, and he begins to make tea. He pushes dishes aside to make room for two cups, and we stand there waiting for the water to boil.

We walk back into the living room with our tea which is steaming and hard to drink. We sit on the floor and put the cups down. They're like little geysers puffing away. Carl puts his hands on my shoulders and looks at me, and then we kiss, my teeth pressing against his, and his muscles are taut and he pulls my shirt out from my jeans and touches my skin underneath and I all of a sudden hug him, having no idea how much I wanted to hug someone, and how long it's been since I really have.

He unbuttons the rest of my shirt, and we kiss again and again and he tugs me along to the bedroom.

We lie down on the bed which has a jumble of covers all over and we push them aside. It's very dark in the room and I can only see a vague outline of him. I hear him unzipping, and kicking off his shoes and I start doing the same, slowly though, remembering how when Art and I first made love he carefully undressed me which made me feel like a doll or something, but Carl reaches over and feels that I've still got on my jeans so he waits a few seconds while I peel them off. Our bodies touch and we rub against each other for a while, kissing, lips, neck, and he softly between my legs and I between his, and we continue touching.

We make love for the rest of the night, whatever's left of it, sleeping on and off, waking, our bodies still sweaty against each other, and finally by morning his face emerges in the light and I begin to notice that he's got freckles all over him, but especially on his back and I begin to count them and he says, five thousand, and we laugh.

We lie embracing and he says, I could stay like this all day, couldn't you? and I say, yes, I wish I could but I have to catch my plane back to Chicago at noon, which I had mentioned earlier to him in the bar.

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We rise slowly from the damp sheets, wandering around naked, gathering up pieces of clothing and we head for the bathroom. I hate to wake up in the morning, I tell him as he turns on the shower. Yeah, he says, who likes to?

He makes us some tea, and this time we drink it, sitting at his kitchen table, and I begin to think about getting back to Chicago, and it kind of feels like a relief to know that. Then I remember I'll be seeing Art tonight—a big reunion probably after our week's separation—lobster at Nantucket Cove where we've gone for holidays and birthdays—and a lazy romantic time back at his apartment—candles burning, and if I give it some thought for a minute or two, I will probably be able to name the records in the order that he'll put them on the stereo.

Well, Marnie, let's go. Carl stands and kisses me on the head and pulls me up and we hug for a moment and walk out into the hall where his dog, Anastasia, is growling at the downstairs door and he snaps her leash on and we walk down the street, stopping for a moment as she pees, and then walking back to his jeep where the three of us get in.

I tell him the address which it turns out is about five blocks away. Hey, he says, it's only around nine; how about coming down to the ocean for a little while and walking along the beach. Anastasia is whining in the back and I say, I wish I could, but I have a lot to do, and I think to myself that probably Aunt Sylvia has called the police by now and there's a dragnet around the city. And besides, the night is over, and I kind of want to get away, get more in the mood for Chicago, but I don't tell him that. Well, he says, I sure wish you would change your mind, it's really beautiful this time of day.

We pull up in front of my aunt's house and I lean over and we kiss and I step down from the jeep and I linger at the door for a moment and then close it and he drives off. And I feel goddamned empty as I watch the jeep disappear around a corner two blocks away.

I walk up the stone steps which are lined with clay flowerpots on each side, and I ring the bell reluctantly, and angry that I gave up my key to Dory, whom I remember for the first time.

Aunt Sylvia answers, in her terrycloth robe. She frowns at me and doesn't say anything, and I think that maybe I should have phoned her to tell her I wouldn't be home. Dory runs down the stairs in her bathrobe and says, Jesus, Marnie, we nearly went insane wondering what the hell happened to you. She's peering at me closely, trying to determine what has occurred, trying to see if the words *I Got Laid* are somehow written on me like a sign. I stand in front of a gigantic fern which is on a Greek-styled pedestal and my aunt finally says, well, at least you're alive, and I don't say anything because all the harm she can do is to call the Chicago branch of the family and tell them what a wild disreputable life I lead.

Dory's standing on the stairs bobbing back and forth, so I say I'm going to pack, and we go up and I ask her first what happened to her and she tells me that the man she left with practically tore her clothes off in the car. She managed to get away, and she caught a taxi back to my aunt's. I then tell her what happened to me, and she looks at me enviously and says, how many times did you do it? and I say I lost count, and laugh as she walks to the bathroom in a huff, and I hear her slamming something down on the counter.

As I start gathering my clothes together, slowly, I hear the phone ringing in the distance. There's about a minute pause in between when it stops and my aunt's voice is calling my name. I let a skirt droop into the suitcase and open the door and she says Marnie again, loud, and I say, yeah, and she says, Art's on the phone long distance. I'll get it in your room, I say and walk across the hall and pick up the receiver and say, ok, and wait for the click which tells me she's hung up downstairs.

He talks to me excitedly: hi, babe, how was your trip? but his words start merging together, and I answer in yeses and nos and sures and all rights, and I don't quite understand why because I should be excited to talk to him, but I'm not. I find myself drawing designs on a notepad my aunt has on the nightstand and I see Carl running along the beach with Anastasia and the more Art talks the more I'm overwhelmed with a heavy thick feeling inside and I sink into the mattress where I'm sitting, and I think, god, at least I should have gone and walked on the beach for a little while; why the hell didn't I do that? it would have probably been nice. And Art's voice comes back into focus and he says, honey, are you listening? and I say, I could have gone walking along the ocean this morning with a friend and I didn't, and he says, what? and I say, oh, nothing, go on with what you were telling me, and he does, and I keep smelling the warm heavy smell in the room when Carl and I woke this morning, and remembering how he rubbed soap over me in the shower, and why the hell didn't I go to the beach for a few minutes? I put the receiver down on the pillow and hear Art's angry excited voice get muffled and then he clicks the button on his end several times, and it finally stops—all that noise—and I hang up, knowing that when I get back to Chicago I can explain things, fix things up, if I want to. □

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Samantha

TWO STORIES BY MARTIN WAMPLER

1. ALL THE WAY TO THE OLD MOON & MARS

Early one afternoon a couple days ago I went back over to Samantha's place again. When I was only a couple blocks away from her apartment I saw her. I watched for a while from a little ways down the street. I couldn't understand what she was doing.

She was walking around cars, looking close at them, and then was writing something down, going on to the next car. She had a tablet and sometimes would shake her head when she wrote down whatever it was. Mostly she was looking close at the cars up by their front fenders. But sometimes she stopped in front of the hoods of the cars. When she was a half block from her own street corner I went up to where she was.

"Oh, hi," she said.

"What are you doing, Sam?" I said.

"Fishing. Doesn't it look like I'm fishing?" she said. "No, on second thought, I'm hanging curtains. What the hell's it look like I'm doing?"

"Well what are you doing then?" I said.

"Billy, leave me alone, okay? Go stack some cans, go ring up somebody's money, watch the old ladies, listen to some lecture, any damn thing. But you just leave me alone, okay?" she said.

"What are you doing, what you writing down?" I said.

"The end of the world, the reason for everything," she said.

"Sam," I said.

"Yeah," she said.

"What are you doing?" I said, tried to get a look at the tablet. It looked like just a list of numbers and some words.

"Countin', I'm countin', now leave me count," she said.

"Countin' what?" I said.

"Oh, power, just power. Jupiter, Saturn, Apollo, old stuff like that," she said.

"Jupiter or Saturn, that makes sense," I said.

"Sure it does, sure," she said, wrote down another number up next to a big, gold-colored car. "I've also got Galaxy, Nova, Mantus Luxus, Vega, Century, some other Apollos, Electras, lots of Barracudas, El Dorados, one Coupe de Ville, Dusters, Chargers, LTD's, you know. Nonsense like that. Power. Every damn body going almost to the moon!"

"Oh, I see," I said, knowing it was cars. " '*Mantus Luxus*'? Where'd you get that?"

"Four or five blocks down. You should have seen it, what a big shiny one," she said, not looking up from the clipboard.

"You finally flipped or something?" I said.

"Or something," she said, went around to the next car. It was another Ford, a big red one, real big. So much automobile. Samantha's old Chevy won't even get her out of town, so she's always had to hitchhike when she's left. For three years I haven't had a car, and I think it's a good thing. I watched her make a check mark after Galaxy 500 on her clipboard list. There must have been eight or ten checks before that one.

"So, you're counting horsepower, right?" I said.

"You're a real bright kid. You should go to school for twenty more years. You might even graduate," she said.

"Look, I come over to see you," I told her.

"Well, hoopy-do," she said, writing down the horsepower number at the fender of a white pickup truck.

"But why you doing what you're doing?" I said.

"You ask a lot of questions for a guy who's been hiding in school so long," she said. "If you really gotta know, I got an adding machine. Somebody gave me one. And I was thinking about your friend Sidney."

"So?"

"So I want to find out just how much horsepower there is. All together. Everybody's got a damn big car, right? Even little old ladies and sorority girls, right? Well I want to find out how much they can kill us, even the old ladies. Now leave me alone."

I watched her write down the numbers down to her street and then up to her apartment house. She didn't hurry. When we got up to her place,

"Ain't that a beaut!" she said when she had opened the door. There was an old handle-type adding machine on the table in the little living room.

"How do you know it really works?" I said.

"I tested it," she said. "I added up a whole bunch of numbers. Now let me work out on that baby. Why don't you fix us some supper like a good little housewife, I'm hungry. There's some tuna fish and macaroni and onions and stuff. Go make something, okay?"

"Okay," I said.

While I was fixing the macaroni-tuna fish supper, I could hear her cranking the handle on that adding machine and shouting. I had the tuna fish fixed right away but waited for her to get through. I read part of a biography of Freud that was lying there underlined. Then I looked through some pictures of a history book about the First World War. Some pictures were circled. Finally she came into the kitchen with a long adding machine strip.

"Do you realize that 443 cars in just the area down Fifth Street to Osmund, and then down Osmund to Second Street, and then down Second to Calumet Avenue totalled 140,440 horsepower? One hundred and forty thousand horses!"

"That's a lot, all right. Here, I've got the macaroni fixed, why don't you eat something? What's it all prove anyway?" I said.

"How much people are all damn power crazy, and they can run us all down the way they ran Sidney down. Can you imagine, 140,000 damn horses? And that's only four square blocks of cars!"

"Sid ran into that guy himself. Nobody ran into Sid," I said.

"But it was power that killed him, right?" she said.

"I guess so," I said.

"Where in the hell would we put them all if they turned all back into horses?" she said.

"*What* turned into horses?" I said.

"All the horsepower," she said. "Do you have any idea where we'd put all the damn horses?"

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"I sure don't know," I said. "Maybe we'd just let them run wild."

"Maybe we're already letting 'em run wild," she said. "*Right*? Running wild all the way up to the damn old moon and Mars and all the way back again!"

"Maybe," I said. "But are you ready to eat? Have you got that stuff all added up now?"

"I haven't started adding it all up," she said.

"I bet you haven't, Sam," I said. "I bet you really haven't, but let's eat, okay?"

"Okay," she said. "But if you find some safe place to put all of those horses everybody's got, would you let me know? Some of the horses that ran over your friend?"

"I'll be sure to let you know," I said. □

2. SOMETHING IN HER HOUSE

What is it about women, about Samantha?

One night a week ago Sam told me again about her folks. It was, "My Momma." She told about stopping there in Nebraska for a couple weeks this last time right after she took off.

"How was it?" I said.

"She was mothering me and I loved it," Sam said.

Sometimes at Samantha's place I watch her and just wonder where she hides her own children. I know what it is when a woman is the mother of someone; I think I know what it was with Marilyn. Whatever Sam has given birth to, it's probably sons of some kind. Maybe that is another one of the main puzzles with her: that she seems like a woman who has children, who always knows a place to hide them. Whenever I've gone over there lately, I've felt that, that she has been loving something very much just before I got there and that whatever it was was still in the house, probably hiding. Maybe sons who would become big as loggers, would not be much with words, but who would be kind. Or maybe one boy, only one, and he would work at a greenhouse and might be called Tim or Tom. His name something silly like that, Timothy. At least it feels as if there is one full-grown, hidden son somewhere in her place sometimes. I can never get the feeling just right but it's a feeling that she's been just loving something, something alive and maybe human and that has to do with her, just her, not me. Something like a child.

Sometimes I think that maybe her main secret is only that she is her own mother. I think of maybe an umbilical cord from up between her legs to her navel, reeling out like a snake to connect at birth again. Maybe she is giving birth to herself over and over because she has found out that she, as her own mother, is a worthwhile thing for her to be. Me feeling this. And that with a man it's different, it all starts out and then stops flat. Me and all other men cut off from the chain, but any woman who has had children could make a line back to all others. And in the end, maybe all women are connected while all men hang like grapes and drop. Women, a formed wall or fence of real, connecting cords and women-people. And sometimes Samantha says she is not being fulfilled. She used to say it a lot when we were together. One day last week she told me that again. Over at her place, last Tuesday morning right before I left for work,

"Just one, just one," she said. One child was what she meant. And I'm as afraid as I've ever been about having any more children. "If I come back to stay at your place, let's do it, have a baby, *one*."

"You know I don't know about that stuff. It still scares the hell out of me," I said.

"You're just selfish, Billy, you know that?" she said. "We can make a life, one life. We should do it."

"I still don't know. In a year, okay? Let's think about it then," I told her.

"Billy, do you know what ecstasy is?" she said.

"No, what's ecstasy?" I asked.

"A guru guy at some outfit in Vancouver one time told me ecstasy is not being selfish. The definition of ecstasy, he said, is 'being outside of the self.' And you know what? I think he was right," she said.

It could be that Sam is right about that guru guy; that could be why some women are so happy, having had something actually go outside of themselves, a life. Women, women and their natural way with life, no chance to deny it. Women like being outside of time, all connected and connecting, physically touching each other with a gift of life, us men so strong, but not really. Men like universities and companies and governments and churches, and grocery store chains, all run by men, all so afraid of women. Because of their natural power, being outside of time, all of the women touching each other. We work so hard to keep women from having power, and it's what they already have. Men and women and time.

And maybe I love Samantha and make love to her to be in the chain of life, to not be a drone for a minute, to kiss near the mouth of the uterus. It *has* to mean something, Being alive. Most of the time I am just part of the big false thing made of men, all of us shouting with our deep voices and standing on all kinds of rubble to see. All of our unnatural trash, wars. The bodies of men, mostly men, in all the wars. Drones in the excitement of death and maybe just nowhere. The way people say no to what they'd like to say yes to. How much it tells about people. They say,

"Marriage sucks, nobody really loves anybody else, women are all little girls playing with dolls, animals at the zoo make more sense than human beings!" Or like some they say,

"It could all be solved with just a lot more screwing." Maybe men are talking to themselves like that, sitting on top of the trash, men like the old ideas that insist and insist because they are shaky ideas. Like something a person sells to another person because he himself does not want to see why he must sell it. Ever since I've known Samantha she has been saying,

"Did you ever think about how nobody tries?" Maybe most women are people who try more. Wonder what it would mean about men. Wonder if I'm really learning how to try. □

MARTIN WAMPLER lives in San Francisco. The stories here are from a novel, She Goes. *Other chapters have been in DECEMBER, and SOUTHWEST REVIEW.*

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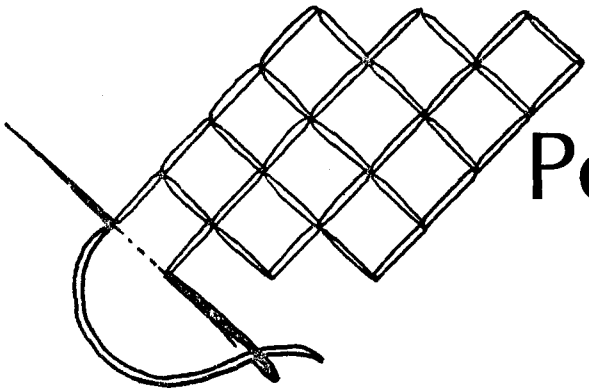
A STORY BY ELIZABETH DUBUS MICHEL



Portraits

Ellen woke at 6:30, just before the alarm went off. She had figured once that she would be forty-nine years, eleven months and eight days old before her youngest child was through high school and she no longer had to get up to send children off. She had never minded getting up early until recently; now, starting the day later seemed to her to be an answer to the problem of time, for the later she started the more nearly her work and her duties would fill all the hours before she could ignore their passage in sleep.

The cat began yowling and peering in at her from his post on the fence outside the kitchen door as soon as she flicked on the kitchen light. She didn't like the cat, she had never liked cats, and even with four children, they had never had one. Dogs, yes, but no cats. Until the youngest was in kindergarten and came home saying David has little kitties to sell, please, can I buy one? Only ten cents and he brought them in a basket, and please, can I use my pennies and buy one? And she had laughed and said she didn't think David was selling the kitties, she thought if they agreed to take one, David would give it to them. But she hated cats, and she didn't want another animal to feed and water, so she said wait and ask your daddy, sure he would say no. But the youngest knew better than she did. When daddy came home she knew to get into his lap and stroke his arm and lean her softness against him and ask for the cat, and he had looked over the pony-tailed head and said, "Well, if you say no, I'll back you up." So they went to David's and picked out a yellow tom and the youngest named him Buttercup.

But she still hated him. Some mornings she tried to get the coffee dripped and her first cup poured before she let him in, but he kept up his demanding yowls, and whenever she went to the table near the door to put out place mats and lay out silver, there he was on the fence, looking at her while he poised himself to jump down when the door opened. So she gave in and opened it and then had to watch him carefully pick out the chunks of cat food and scatter them all over the floor while he ate.

She had begun talking to her babies the day they were born. All those beginnings had grown now into continuing conversations that picked up in the morning, and again after school, and into the evening. She was the listener, the gourd into which they poured the substance of their lives, and if at times the substance was larger and weightier than the vessel could quite hold, if at times the strong flow in its totality overwhelmed her, she told herself that that was what she had worked for, that was what she had wanted.

So in the mornings she knew what was needed, who needed encouragement, who praise. She told herself that all she needed was her two cups of strong, black coffee.

And when they were gone, husband and children all leaving together, she thought about the day while she loaded the dishwasher and swept the kitchen floor. She needed every minute to be filled; nothing tore at her as much as did the oddments of time during a day, too short to be useful, too long to be endured.

But today she had the house to clean, and a beauty shop appointment at ten, and a luncheon meeting at twelve. And then the grocery store, and home to put up the groceries, and then to school to pick up the children, and then she would be safe, because once the children were home her time was validated, she was home caring for children.

When the children were small, she had always had a maid. But when they were older, able to care for their own rooms and to help her with the rest of the house, she was glad not to have outside help. She had never been able to stay remote from her help; she knew their problems and spent time trying to solve them. The griefs and anxieties they brought to work with them were harder to deal with than the housework itself; she found that she preferred scrubbing bathrooms to playing God.

There was a new shampoo girl; she was talky. She asked questions that forced an answer, but the questions couldn't have really mattered to her, nor the answers. It was rather like an improbable dialogue in a foreign language conversation book, the girl reading Monsieur A's part, Ellen taking Monsieur B's. The girl's fingers were strong on her scalp, and they seemed to hold her down, to make her listen to the questions, to make her answer. Then Janice, who had been doing her hair for twelve years, came over and said to the girl, "We don't talk to Mrs. Daniels. She likes to be quiet." So the girl stopped talking, and her fingers didn't force anything, they just wound through Ellen's hair and rubbed the shampoo into puffs and whirls of suds, and dug down into her scalp with deep, thrusting strokes.

The girl was black, and Ellen thought that perhaps she should have talked to the girl after all, that perhaps the girl's talking to the patrons while she washed their hair was her way of making the act a part of camaraderie, so that she wouldn't be

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demeaned cleansing away the dirt and oil and dried-up hair spray from all those white heads. But it was too late, the girl had stopped talking, and the only contact between them now was her fingers to Ellen's scalp. She closed her eyes and leaned back into the rushing water pouring warmly down from the spray hose.

She didn't talk to Janice, either. She always brought a book from the stack high on the table next to her side of the bed, and used it to fence out the women around her, who came to the beauty shop as to a party and added their measure of words to the dimensions of the shop, shaping it into something that was at once familiar and unreal.

She didn't stop reading even when she was out from under the dryer and Janice was combing her hair. She didn't watch each wave as it was formed, each curl as it was brushed. She knew that when Janice finished, her hair would control her face, that together they would present a completely comprehensible image to everyone around her, one that told infallibly who and what she was. Who and what she was taken to be.

She drove to the meeting with the scent of hair spray heavy around her. She was a little late, the hostess thrust a Bloody Mary into her hand and told her to come on, they were ready to eat lunch. The others were clustered near the refectory table at the end of the long family room, and she went toward it, surprised to hear their welcomes, surprised because they sounded as though they were really glad to see her, because she was not glad to see them, it was of no importance to her whether she ever saw anyone in this room again.

But she asked this one about her child's operation, and that one about plans for the summer, as though she did care, because she kept thinking that if she did it long enough, it would become part of her by a kind of osmosis that would defeat her resistance, and she would then join her image in the beauty shop mirror.

She filled her plate with hot creamed crab and asparagus vinaigrette and soft yeasty rolls and found a place to sit, and ate while the ambience of the room took on all the complex tones of the words and laughter made by all the rest of the group, and she alone was silent, she alone was the untouched flute.

But she was there, she shouldn't be rude, she should contribute, it might yet be her redemption, so she listened to the talk around her, and as she had been able to enter into it all the thousands of other times she had heard it, so she entered now.

Then lunch was over, and the meeting started, and there came a place when the discussion seemed so unnecessary, the issue so vague, that she spoke up in irritation, trying to move the group past the foolish obstacle. And there was a swirl, and an eddy in the chatter. Her words were a rock that broke the run, but then the group passed around it with a slight cresting to push past it, and went on more rapidly than before.

She wished she could be as interested, as involved, as these women were. The outcome of their projects really mattered to them at, she felt, a deep level. They became invigorated through their work, while she, she only became irritable and conscious of the hours spent on the telephone, or at meetings. She had finally taken only assignments where she could work alone, on her own schedule, but while that had lessened the strictures of one problem, it had also contributed to her essential solitude, so that she came to know very few of the women well.

At the times when her irritation peaked and became more than irritation, when it slid over into anger at herself for getting trapped in so much work, and then was repressed into depression, she would spend hours tearing herself apart, trying to fathom why she ever did any of it in the first place, since the early anticipation was so soon replaced by boredom, fatigue and anger.

She anticipated the mail, and the doorbell, in the same way. Each might offer a way out, each might suddenly present to her a new choice, a life that would give her, on even a small scale, the satisfaction that was so far missing. She thought that when that anticipation finally tired and grew still, there would be no resilience left, either, and her life would crumble inward upon itself.

She remained conscious of the room, and the people in it, only by the effort of her senses to perceive and relate impressions. Tension was rising in her like mercury in a tube; it was being warmed and raised by the inevitableness of the afternoon, by the repetition of what meant nothing to her. To calm it, to force it back down, she deliberately focused on what went on around her, and the colors of the women's dresses, the pure scent of the sweet peas from the bottle-blue vase at her elbow, the aftertaste of crab and asparagus on her tongue, the sinking softness of the tweed cushions she leaned against, and the rhythm and inflection of the words built a shelter of reality that she could get under, and be still.

She had a small sense of exultation when the meeting was over, and she had not tried to bolt. Even as the others, she had stayed through it, and this gave her hope that perhaps she was pulling out of whatever malady it was that isolated her, and that her erratic attempts to find peace, whatever that was, might still be fulfilled.

She went to the grocery on the way home. There was something about the rows and bins of fresh produce that calmed her. In the back of her memory, she could just pull out the form of a wagon, and bushel baskets of green beans and butterbeans and corn, and an old black man with a squashed straw hat coming to the door and selling them the vegetables. And then the odor of snapbeans cooking with white onions and bacon would take over the house, and she could swing on the rope by the door and think about how good the dinner would be. Summer dinners were always the best, because the windows were open and the smells from the kitchen met the green smells of the yard in a homey bouquet that brought peace.

So now she looked at scalloped green artichokes and frond-tipped orange carrots and stocky purple and white turnips almost as though she were in an art museum, where a moment of the past has been frozen into immobile reality.

There was a man just ahead of her, pushing his basket slowly. They were moving at almost the same pace, as though they had been choreographed to be the two figures in a dance. At first he was just part of the composition, his pale yellow coat blending somewhere between the depth of the lemons and the blandness of the cauliflowers, but then he turned toward her, and she saw his face stand out like a sign that has suddenly been illuminated.

He turned away almost immediately, so that she could not recall what his face looked like. But she knew what it felt like.

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It had given her an immense feeling of response, and sympathy. She had felt that she was almost home again. And while telling herself not to be absurd, not to act like a typical forty year old woman, fantasizing, she picked up a bag of potatoes and dropped it in her basket, and bumped hastily around a stack of soft drinks into the next aisle, where she could see the man at the far end selecting soups.

She followed him over the entire store, her attention barely focused on the items she took from the shelves and put in her basket. She began to be embarrassed, and once when she caught up with him at the cake mixes, and for a moment they stood together, she felt her face flush, and she turned away for fear he could read her mind.

She dawdled then, allowing him to get far ahead of her, but her mind went with him, and spoke to him. My car is outside, it said, and I have credit cards in my purse. Come with me, and we will find a place with treed hills where we can walk in the falling dusk and hold hands across the gap of our separateness. And someone else will pick the children up at school—or perhaps no one ever will, and the children will sit up, like statues to remind of a civilization that once was.

And blast, she had forgotten the cat food; she had to go back. By the time she had gotten it and come up to the checking stand, he was paying his bill, and he would leave, carrying the groceries which might have given her a map to him, only she had not allowed herself to look. She had not wanted to see that he was buying for two, or more, a family.

She pushed her cart up to the counter and began to unload her groceries, putting the cold things together, the bread and rolls in a separate safe place. The bags of chickens had leaked watery red blood over the canned goods, and she took tissue from her purse to carefully wipe them clean. The checker asked about the children then. She was used to seeing them in summer and reached out for the small warmth the familiarity would bring. After she had asked about the children, she could then offer something about herself, tentatively pushing it out for Ellen to look at, and then waiting for the response which was her due. But the checker was old, her news was usually depressing, and today Ellen couldn't care about grandsons with broken arms and sons who had left their wives; today she wanted to say, Don't you see how pulled I am, there are five people and two dogs and a cat and a tank of fish that all need something from me every day, whether I have it or not. So you must not need something, too. I am giving you my business, I am buying your stock and giving you money. It is all I can give, don't ask me to be human, too.

The boy who carried out the bags was cheerful. He had a new motorbike and he got off at four and it would stay light until after seven, so he would ride in the darkening light at the edge of the city and the power he got from his bike would make him forget that he had dropped out of high school and wasn't going to trade school, and might be carrying bags when he was thirty. When you are young you don't know what you are saying yes to.

She carried the groceries into the kitchen and put them up. She thought of the meals she would cook with them, the whole gobbles of time that would be used up, the chopping, the mixing, the stirring, the watching. A meal was supposed to be a celebration, and she tried to make their meals that way, with food the family liked, and talk about the kind of day they had all had, and attention given to each in turn. They all ate together every night, no watching TV, no casual coming and going. When the children were very little, she had once told someone that civilization was eating with people who could cut their own meat.

She still had about twenty minutes before it was time to pick up the children. She went to her room to change clothes, and detoured to the front door to pick up the mail. There was a bulky brown envelope with her brother's handwriting curving across it, and she was immediately curious, but she put it down on the desk and went through the rest, the two or three bills, the graduation invitation, the announcements of meetings, the junk. And then she went to her room and changed into a house-dress and carefully hung up her blue linen suit and then sat in the leather rocker and opened the brown envelope.

It was a magazine that she had seen before; it had published several of her brother's short stories, and she remembered now that her mother had told her he had another coming out. And there was a note from him clipped to the front; it said, "This is the first story in which Barbara becomes assertive. I hope she continues to grow." And she began reading the story and knew it was another of those stories about her family, and read on and knew that she was Barbara.

She read on, and she remembered the incident the story was about, remembered it in almost the exact way, though she hadn't thought about it in a long time, if she ever had. It was strange to be reading about herself. She saw that her past life had value to her brother because he could use it. Would he use what she was doing now, would anyone ever use it?

And she put down the magazine and she thought of her brother, living alone because he and his wife were divorced, and thinking how it would be to see the children only on weekends, when you were planning on being compliant and fun and a good parent.

She measured the hours of her life against those of her brother, thinking what a spendthrift she was, thinking how frugally he cared for his. And some of his hours were not really gone, they could be seen and touched and read. As the fig preserves in the pantry and the clothes she sewed for the children were her invested time, so were his stories his. Except the preserves would be eaten on winter mornings, held between the hot buttery halves of biscuits, spooned up with a bite of pink ham. The clothes would tear and become faded, and with her investment lost, she would only have it to do over again.

She thought of living alone, of the control she would have over the spending of her hours, and that other people's needs would not then be more important than her own. She knew she was often cross; she felt it to be the frustration of a traveler in a strange land, made to conform to rituals that meant nothing to him.

But she knew that inside her was someone who had a passport to another country, a happier place of quietness and work. She could see herself in this place, could know that its customs and forms, its manners and mores, would be comfortable to her. She knew, too, that the road leading to it was impassable.

She read over her brother's note. He said he hoped Barbara continues to grow, and she thought, yes, in his mind she can. In his mind she can grow.

Because she used to think, especially when the children

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were small and their growth was so measurable, so demanding of new shoes and pants and sweaters, that growth happened anyway, without anything being done about it. One day you would have an unreasoning toddler and then would come the day when you had a school-child, able to understand directions and willing to comply.

But of course it didn't work that way; children, no one, could like a volunteer tomato in a garden just grow, just push a way in, take over space, establish an identity and maintain it. Growth, she had decided, was more subtle than that, and she wondered sometimes if she even knew anymore what it really was.

So looking at the children when she picked them up at school, seeing the long rambling legs and the soft new breasts, she still could not tell herself that they had grown since the year before in any way that would matter. If her role were to be the wall that they tried themselves against, holding firm against their attacks and yielding only when those attacks were true and strong and right, who was her wall? Against what did she pit herself so that her growth too became viable and real?

She remembered, after they were all home, that she had forgotten to get the Lancaster's anniversary present. She would go now, would drive to the new antique and decorator shop in the nearby mall, and then when her husband asked her if she had done it, she could say yes.

She had been in the shop before. Though she wasn't a browser, didn't spend hours in stores skimming over the munificence of wares like a butterfly in a field of flowers, she did know this shop, because the young man who owned it had spoken at a club meeting, and she had been introduced to him. She had known that he liked her, that he would talk to her.

He was in the back of the shop, uncrating a painting, but she wanted him to help her, so she walked on back and watched him pull the picture from the last clinging excelsior and set it on the floor.

And looking at the picture, a chill fell upon her like a cloak of ice-crystals, and her purse shivered in her hand. She saw the fair-haired woman caught in eternity, her ornate gold ear-rings never to shake and shine again, the book in her hand to be left unread, the music on the harpsichord unplayed. There was a large framed sampler in the background of the picture, and she knew that the woman had done it, had bent over the heavy linen and pulled the colored yarns through until the words were written, and all the tedious details filled in. She was looking, she thought, at a life.

"It's rather nice, I think," Barrett said, putting his hand on her arm and drawing her back so that the light fell less glaringly on the paint. "Unsigned, of course, and it can't be attributed to anyone. But someone of the 17th century Dutch school, busy like everyone else recording upper middle class life. I don't think it would fit in your house, though."

"No, I wouldn't want it," she said, and she turned away and walked back into the main room. "I want a present for the Lancasters. It's their wedding anniversary tomorrow, and he's my husband's law partner, so . . ."

"So something big and impressive and hang the expense. Well, I've got just lots that will fill that bill."

She settled on a Russian samovar, a large glowing brass pot that was beautiful and rather useless and was perhaps a commentary rather than a gift, but then she couldn't give them anything they'd buy for themselves.

Barrett wrapped it himself, and carried the box out to the car, his mustache tickling the top of the bright green bow as he hefted the weight. She drove home with the gift beside her a testament to her reliability, her attention to her duties.

And tomorrow night they would take the box to the Lancasters' house, and carry it in and watch the Lancasters be pleased/surprised/flattered by their gift. They would then have a drink, or maybe two drinks, and then they would go to the club for dinner, and there would be wine, a very good wine, and jewel-colored liqueurs. She would get to bed very late, and be very tired the next morning, but it was for only one evening, and as a friend of hers had once said to her, "It's just one evening out of your life. You're not taking them to raise." Which was true, but there were so many just one evenings.

So now it was time to get dinner, and ask someone spelling words, and remind someone else of an orthodontist appointment, and for the fifth time that day to sweep up the mess the cat made when he ate.

And at dinner she said yes, she had gotten the Lancasters' present, and yes, she could drive a car pool to the planetarium, and yes, spend the night company could come on Friday. But she was drawn to it, she wanted to enter their lives, it was important to her that she do that. The life of the mind, which perhaps was all that made anything else real, was a vast bubble enclosing each of them, and she wanted to put all the bubbles together, like a child blowing soap, and to live inside.

But the children, those shimmering bubbles who wanted to fly free and high, liked being enclosed, being separate, and though their surfaces had some places of clarity and transparency, much of it was obscured with the irridescence of the reflection of the glories they saw and felt and she knew nothing about.

Walter had brought a brief home, and she sat near him in the sittingroom they'd made out of the old nursery and worked on the mending, filling the basket by her side. They had put a fireplace in when they'd redone the room, and she had hung an old mirror out of her mother's house over it. It had a heavy frame, and was almost too large for the size of the wall, but she liked old things, even if they didn't quite do, so it hung there.

She didn't have light enough to see her work, so she reached behind her and turned on the lamp, and as she did so, as the light came on, it created a small explosion of brilliance in the mirror opposite her, and she started and looked up.

Within the golden frame of the mirror she sat, work-basket at her knee and cloth in her hand. Her small desk where she kept her accounts and her engagement book and the yearbooks of all the clubs she belonged to stood out in the circle of light, and the pile of books on the top threw its bulky shadow against the wall. It was, she thought, the second portrait she had seen that day, and as she had not wanted the first, as the sight of it had chilled her, so did she not want this one.

In a kind of defiance to the diaphanous promise of time made permanent, of life arrested and given worth by a creativity that did not belong to her, she turned to Walter. "Walter," she said, "I don't ever want to want to have my portrait painted."

And she shifted her chair so that the perspective changed, and when she looked again at the mirror, the composition was dissolved and the threat was gone. □

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ERIC LARSEN lives in New York City and is no stranger to the NAR.

A STORY BY ERIC LARSEN

Travel Notes: Fragments from Smyrna

"The broken wall, the burning roof and tower. . ."

He had been told about the earthquakes and warned about them, but he had not felt one. Then before dawn one morning there was a tremor. It was minor, nothing important, but still it was frightening. Above all it seemed unreal.

Thomas thought someone was moving his bed, bouncing the mattress up and down the way you might do to wake someone up. He did wake up and there was no one there, but the bouncing didn't stop. It was like a car rolling quickly over smooth corduroys in pavement buckled by heat. He sat up and swung his feet to the floor, and the floor was doing it too. The entire room was doing it, the hotel, all of Izmir.

Carrie was saying something in her sleep, rolling her head on the pillow. Thomas touched her bare shoulder to wake her up. It's an earthquake, he whispered, but just then it stopped, vanished abruptly into stillness, and she didn't believe him. She gazed at him with a kind of distrust. Why didn't you wake me up? she said. She had been having a dream. The two of them were inside an airliner that was going to crash. They were high up, she said, in the thin freezing air above the clouds, in the sparkling sunlight, yet for some reason Thomas could imagine only a grainy image in black and white of an old-fashioned DC-3 falling past distant towers of clouds, its wings turning slowly around.

Thin light was gathering at the window, and Thomas went over to look out. He pulled back the curtain with his hand.

An old rusted freighter moved slowly shoreward across the wide bay, barely leaving a wake on the placid water. In great letters on the side of the flaking hull stood the words LYNES LINES. After a moment, Thomas opened the door to the small terrace and went out. There were the fresh smells of early spring in the air, and with them the dank salt scent of the bay. He looked at the battered ship again; it said LYKES LINES and not LYNES LINES. He had seen a misspelled sign on a fence once in New York that said DON'T SUPPORT DECIET, and he thought of it now, absently, as he looked out over the mysteriously placid water.

Mist hung far out over the bay, suspended in thin gray layers over the smooth surface like last night's smoke. Everything was utterly, absolutely silent. It was like a photograph that stretched from edge to edge of his sight. Nothing moved except the deserted ship and the handful of gulls flying as if in slow motion around its stern. It seemed to Thomas that if he were to scream there would be no sound.

After a time he went back in. Carrie was sitting up in bed, smoking a cigarette. The sheet was pushed down around her hips, and her heavy breasts hung naked, the dark nipples puckered and erect, as with a chill.

They spent the days waiting for mail that never arrived. They walked through the narrow streets of the old city and looked in the covered ships. From inside the shabby tea houses unshaven Turks peered out from the darkness, stared at them blinking in the sunshine. In one of the shops Thomas bought Carrie a medallion with the ancient sun-face of a woman, and she wore it around her neck so the heavy medallion hung between her breasts.

In the streets men in ragged clothes pushed old wooden carts with tiny bells suspended on strings above them. They sold bread-rings and roasted almonds, dyed pistachios and Turkish pastries lying in pans of honey. The air was sweet and pungent everywhere with incense and perfumes and spices and the dung of horses, and the *muezzin* sang out in eerie tones from crackling loudspeakers set awkwardly atop the cracked domes of the shabby, beaten mosques.

At the APO there was no mail, and they walked back to the hotel through narrow dusty streets and over broken sidewalks where ragged men were sleeping with their backs against the walls and their feet protruding so you had to step carefully over them. In front of the hotel it was different because it looked like the *Côte d'azur* with the green palm trees and the blue bay and the wide tile sidewalks. There was a young boy whose face and throat were covered with thick reddish scabs and who had no nose except two slits as if someone had made them with the tip of a knife. He sluiced the tile walks with buckets of water and then swept them with a stiff broom so there was no dust and it was always sweet and cool and fresh as if there had just been a rain.

In the hotel room Carrie lay on the bed in her underwear and read Simone de Beauvoir, and Thomas wrote in his journal, but pointlessly, because he could never find any shape in what he wrote. He read *The Unquiet Grave*. He took off his clothes and lay down on the bed, but Carrie turned over and pulled the sheet over her and fell asleep. The night before, she had waked up crying but couldn't remember why. Thomas tried to sleep, but gazed instead at the shapes of her body. He reached over and pressed his hand against her belly above the tangle of black hair. She stirred but didn't waken. In the street below, men cried out in ancient,

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tired voices, selling wares from their wooden carts. The palm fronds outside the window moved gently in the afternoon breeze, and brightly painted fishing boats, blue and yellow and red, crossed and re-crossed the sparkling bay under the sun.

On Easter morning a Russian liner sailed into the bay. Thomas watched it from the terrace—sleek and lovely, pure and white as a seabird, moving smoothly in the dazzling sunlight over the bright blue water of the bay. In the dining room at breakfast there was restrained, self-conscious laughter among the young officers and their nervous wives, and at the service club there was thin greasy coffee and a colored map of the United States pinned to the wall and a sign that said *This is your service club we invite you to enjoy it but please keep the facilities clean*, and the girl behind the counter where they kept the billiard balls said she was sorry but, no, there wasn't a scheduled bus after all.

Carrie was wearing a denim skirt and a blue scarf from Venice over her dark hair, and Thomas wanted to tell her how lovely she was, but she touched his hand for a moment and squeezed it and then turned away. They met five British students who sang songs and did dirty gag routines for the officers' clubs and together they rented a *dolmus* and rode out through the squalid outskirts of the city and onto the open road in the sunlight over pale green hills scattered with broken rock and distant groves of olive trees like the pictures in Sunday school books of the Holy Land. The driver turned on the radio to the station that played Western songs, and everyone sang along with the music, then everyone shared cigarettes with everyone else, and the driver smiled and nodded to show them how pleased he was.

He took them first to the statue of Artemis with the mysterious clusters of egg-shaped breasts hanging down like tiers of dugs in front of her. It was cool inside the thick stone walls, and the moist air was silent and still.

Afterwards they walked outdoors, among the ruins of the goddess's temple, where the Americans from the military base stood clustered like uneasy tourists for their Easter service in the open air. A wind came up from among the shattered fragments of fallen columns and billowed the preacher's skirts; it scattered his papers upward like fluttering, released birds, and his black-sleeved arm shot up against the sky too late to stop them. A woman shrieked. Tall grass stood moving in the breeze among the broken marble.

At the house of the Virgin, Thomas and Carrie went down to the spring where the water came out of a rock, and Carrie bent down and drank from her cupped hands, then stood up again and looked at Thomas with a questioning, hesitant smile in her dark eyes. The breeze touched her hair and her lips were wet in the warmth of the sun. A nameless fear rose up and tightened in Thomas's throat, then slowly passed, but left him frightened. That night in the hotel he had a dream that he was standing on a hill and saw the sky itself freeze over suddenly like frosted glass and then shatter completely and it was the end of everything, utterly, and nothing remained but screaming and silence. Then the morning after that they went down on the quay in Smyrna and sailed for Istanbul. □

JUDITH PYNCHON

BUILDING THE GOAT-PEN

It wasn't meant to be metaphysical;
it was meant to be
work: lifting,
hammering, sawing
work. Oh, there was
some measuring,
but that was mechanical.
Then, as we lolled
around the kitchen table,
stupid, limp, idle—
Tinkle, Tinkle. The goat was at the door.

Just to joke we said:
"Who is the goat?"
A local witch's familiar?
A relative of Pan?
The balloon man?
Someone serious said:
"Has anyone looked
at a hoof?"
Then, *Tinkle, Tinkle*. The goat was at the door.

Deterioration set in fast.
We hammered, but only halfway;
we sawed, but too short;
we gave up lining boards up.
We said, and this
was the fatal
mistake, "Let's think
about what we're doing."
Maybe we should be
penning the goat on paper,
and so at night
we'd write,
in the manner of the Shelleys.
We dreamed elegant
goat-fantasies,
elaborate shaggy goat-jokes,
weird goat-masques, goat-tales.

Then the whole thing fell apart.

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Molly

A STORY BY NANCY CASKEY

The narrow metal blade, arching from brick gatepost to brick gatepost, sliced the city apart from the hospital (still pond, no more moving). Bound by high speed driving into a carapace of isolation, wound with old fears and a thread of new delight, Ann slowly searched, now, for a parking slot under the elms.

Stopped, she felt still in limbo, not yet susceptible to Molly's expectation. In private, unmeasured time, she stretched fully, the palms of her hands flat against the roof of the car behind her. Deflated from her yawn, she adjusted the mirror, pulled out her hairpins, putting them in the lap of her flowered dress, peacefully combed out her hair and reformed it.

(It is time to recall energy to useful purpose, to let in demands; to arrange, now, before lunch, the bags of cherries, peaches, grapes in a basket, and so transform neglect into a form of allegiance.)

The fruit arranged, Ann looked up to see a group of patients following the cement track across the grass. She waited as they walked, one behind the other, none beside another, some scrutinizing the cement run beneath their feet with mistrust, some impassively impelled by the back of the neck before them. (The sun is shining; the trees, in full green leaf, water the pale grass with shadow; katydids are buzzing; marigolds blaze rectitude from a cement-bound splotch in front of the yellow brick building. For whom is this pungency of summer? It was, Ann knew, hers to engage; theirs, with only fragile expectation, to discover.)

She backed out of the car, protecting the arrangement of fruit, and closed the door with a shove of her knee. As she reached the steps, Molly's voice said,

"Hi!"

Ann looked up. Molly was watching from a round screened window above the front door.

"Oh, hi!"

"I'm glad you came. I was afraid you wouldn't really come after all."

"Well, I did, though. I wanted to."

"I'm really glad. They'll let me come down in a minute. Or do you want to come up?"

"It doesn't matter. I'll see when I sign in. I need to get rid of this, though."

"It looks beautiful."

"If I don't spill it all. I'll be right in."

Ann worked a finger through the ill-fitting screen door, nudged it open with her foot, and entered the reception hall which was barren except for obtrusive cleanliness. The only piece of furniture was a small wooden table with a large open book on it. A wooden nurse's cage protruded from the wall at her left. Ann balanced her basket on the shelf in front of the window in the cage, and waited for the nurse to look up from her file cabinet.

"Visiting hours don't begin until two o'clock."

"I would like to see Molly Owen and I came early especially to take her out to lunch. They've let me do it before."

"Are you a relative?"

"No, I'm a friend, but I come quite often. I have to leave early because of my children, so I always come early."

"Well, you'll have to sign these slips and that book over there."

"That's all right. Shall I go up for her?"

"No. She'll be right down. You wait here."

Ann set the fruit down on the floor by the table, signed her name, and waited for the sound of the key in the lock. The door opened almost at the same moment that she heard the key nick, direct and unhesitating, into place. Molly pushed through ahead of the nurse, and then stopped. (She's wearing black, only black: cashmere sweater, pleated skirt, thin, elegant stockings, pumps with grosgrain bows, all of it, flat, flat black. She has chopped off her fine, pale hair, grooved it behind her ears, but still it makes a band of light about the whiteness of her face. The workpatterns of tension, the anxiety of night in deep bloom under her eyes, have not clouded the resonant blue of her eyes, nor destroyed the serenity of the gentle planes of her face.) Ann, adrift in sterile cleanliness, Molly, arrested by the guardian door, needed time to realize that expectation had become reality, that a new space was to be made of affection, of memory, a space for the two of them to move within.

Feeling that it had started, each ran to the other; they wrapped their arms about each other and kissed.

"You look pretty."

"Oh. I just got my hair cut. It's probably too short, but I couldn't make it do anything." Molly's fingers made sure that it was trapped behind her ears.

"It's very shiny. Where would you like to go for lunch?"

"The hotel restaurant downtown is closed up."

"That's disappointing. Is there someplace else you'd like?"

NANCY CASKEY lives in Lincoln, Massachusetts, where she gardens, studies Portuguese "sporadically", and works in community theatre both as actress and director.

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"There is a Howard Johnson's. It's not too far."

"Let's do that, then."

"I just have to tell them." Molly turned to the nurse standing in the doorway behind her. "I've had all my medications."

"Do you want to do something about this fruit?" Ann picked it up from the floor.

"Oh, it looks so good. Everything we don't have."

"I'll take it up for you. Have a nice lunch and I'll sign you out." The nurse took the basket from Ann.

"Thank you." Molly had already reached the sunshine, through the door Ann held open.

In the restaurant, where bunches of people waited for tables, Ann and Molly were immediately taken to a booth. (They know she's a patient and they are afraid to hear pain pushing her voice, afraid to see a gesture that is pain's tic, because the Special Clam Plate, the Exotic Choice of Flavors, the certainties of the Good Life, might lose their substance and feel less true than pain.) Ann was angry that they were hidden, but her anger was discreetly contained by the high backs of the booth.

"Do you think it would be all right for me to have a drink?"

"If you think it's all right, it's fine—if you don't mind if I don't. I get sleepy driving home."

"Don't feel you have to. It's just that it's been so long and it seems such a treat."

"Please do, then. What would you like?"

"I guess I'd like an Old-Fashioned with everything in it. How is Peter? I had such a nice letter from him, thanking me for some socks I made. He sounds like a young man. I probably wouldn't even recognize him now if I saw him, it's been so long. I was afraid they wouldn't fit because I really didn't have any idea how big to make them, so I made them like Toby's because they're about the same age and I thought there probably wouldn't be too much difference, and that spiral pattern fits just about any size."

The waitress came to stand impartially at the end of the table, addressing herself neither to one nor the other. Ann ordered Molly's drink.

"I hate to ask this, but I wonder if you would mind doing me a huge favor?" Molly began to pluck at the skin under her earlobe. Ann now saw the red, shiny lump there, just in back of her jawbone.

"Sure. What is it? Do you need cigarettes?"

"I've run out of my credit for this week. Are you sure you wouldn't mind? I hate to ask you." (Ann knew how deeply Molly hated to ask, even this small thing, how much she wanted to offer gifts by her own choice, and not give her need, helplessly. Ann was not able to forget the time when Jenny had been killed riding Molly's bicycle. When Ann had gone over to see her, Molly was sitting on her bed. As soon as she saw Ann, Molly reached for the pile of movie magazines on her bedside table, pulled the comforter up over her knees, and thumbed the familiar pages without speaking. Ann hadn't known what to say, so she played jacks by herself on the floor beside the bed. Molly didn't look at Ann at all, but finally she said something about Merle Oberon. Later Ann had collected money from their friends for a new bicycle for Molly, because she was sure that the parents, grieving over the loss of their beautiful, gifted Jenny, had no thought for Molly's bicycle; nor, she knew, would Molly have spoken of it. When Ann brought the money, Molly said she didn't need it, that Ann should have asked before doing any such thing. Molly never had another bicycle, and told Ann later that she had given the money to the Community Chest. So, now, Ann would buy the cigarettes, knowing that Molly suffered in asking even so small a thing as this, and that both had to pretend that there was no flick of degradation in asking.)

"I'd like to get them for you. What kind do you want?"

"Tareytons, if they have them, or else anything."

When Ann returned, Molly was no longer worrying the lump, but instead was pushing the ice down in her cocktail, letting it bob up and poking it down again.

"That's enough for the whole rest of the week. I really do appreciate it. Especially with a drink. Thanks a lot."

"You're most welcome."

"By the way," Molly pushed the ice all around the glass, "I wondered if you ever got that peppermint patty I sent?"

"I did and it was delicious—what was left of it. It got kind of mashed inside the envelope. It was really nice of you to think of it. It was good to remember those days when I practically lived on them—and peanut brittle. Do you remember the peanut brittle we used to get?"

"Yes, but I wish I could have found a Schrafft's peppermint patty. They don't sell them here, or else they don't make them anymore. I don't know if this was as good as the old kind."

"It made me very nostalgic. I'm sorry I didn't write you. It was such a nice thing to have done. I've been so awful about writing."

"I just didn't know if the post office might have stopped it or something."

Ann saw the waitress approaching, pulling at her apron pocket for her order book. "Do you know what you would like?"

"I guess I'd like the chicken if that's really all right."

"That's fine."

The waitress curled the pages of the book over the roll at the top and scrabbled the order. When she had left, Molly said that she was going to the ladies' room.

"Would you like me to come with you?"

"No, it's O.K. I'll be right back. I know where it is." Molly wrenched herself out of the slot, briefly braced herself with her fingertips against the table, and smiling at Ann, walked carefully past her. Ann would not turn for fear of catching Molly's eye and making her feel untrusted and watched.

(Oh Molly! Dignity is too lonely. If only you could say, *It hurts,* and I could tell you that I'm sorry. Why must you always be so brave, so I can only admire you and fear for you? Once you let me comfort you, but it was only because you were drunk, and it would hurt you if I spoke of it.) Ann was grateful for that time when they had been fifteen and men too old for them had brought them to a New Mexican bar, telling them that the place had just been re-opened after some shootings. They had felt daring and excited as they drank rum and coke with grown men who were at ease and took for granted the romantic Hawaiian music and the dark-skinned musicians in bright satin rippling sleeves. Molly had not cried until Ann had helped her reach the toilet, and then she had been sick and had wept, crying over and over, "If Mamma could see me now." Helpless, she had let Ann soothe her and sponge her face.

Now Ann waited, and wondered about her wisdom. Might Molly fall? Might she, with purpose, hurt herself? Might her drink and her medication combine in a disaster? Ann began to

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feel time, as a wet mist coating her, becoming heavier and heavier.

The waitress, carrying the tray to a serving table, stopped. "Should I wait on the dinner?"

"No, she's coming right back. It's all right to serve it." Ann felt that she could at least look around in proof, and there was Molly, still walking carefully, coming from the far door. The weight of time vanished. Ann turned back to the waitress. "She's just coming now."

Molly came and stood by Ann, waiting for the waitress to finish setting out the dishes. Ann knew that Molly's smile was to be taken as a sign of patience with the waitress, not as reassurance about herself, and still Ann could not resist asking if everything were all right.

"Yes, fine. That chicken looks good, and it's so good to have a green salad. That's one thing we don't get much of in the hospital, green vegetables."

"How long have you been upstairs?"

"I had a bad time for a while. But I'm better now. We have a new doctor who takes a lot of interest and really spends time. He is trying a new medicine and he is very careful about it and comes to see how I am. I don't even have to ask for him. He expects me to get back down stairs soon."

(Where does she find her optimism? She struggles so valiantly, episode after episode, utterly absorbed by the expectation of success. They cut out strips of paper dolls for her, fragile and faceless models, and she says, Yes, I can dance like that and be strong like that: that is how I really am and how I shall be. I shall stand up and perhaps even stretch out my arms and touch someone. She does not suspect that she is saying yes to a paper doll of limp and fragile newsprint, stamped all over with disasters; that when it tears, they simply unfold the next flat form, and again say, see what you can do; and again she says eagerly, Oh, yes, it will be better now and I know I can. And so often she comes so close.)

"I really like talking to him, not just about my problems, but in general. He's had an interesting life. He used to do construction work before he decided to be a psychologist. Actually he is a psychologist, not a regular doctor. But he's just as good, in fact better than many of the regular doctors. He's not in so much of a hurry and he seems to really like to talk."

"I'm glad you've found someone like that. Would you like dessert?"

"I might as well, if that's all right with you."

"Of course. But I'm getting too fat to have any."

"You're not fat at all. But your hair has certainly gotten gray. I have some too. Doesn't it seem funny that we should be getting gray hair?"

"I can't see that you have any." (How can she forget that I have gray hair now? Each time I come she discovers it again. And each time I need to proclaim that I don't mind gray hair, am quite used to it, that it's really an interesting color —knowing that Molly recognizes it as the visible spinning away to—what? Pray God, it's a person. How can she endure looking for the person she is and find that person dissolving before she has even found her. Do not look with such wonder at my gray hair. How are we to distinguish wonder from horror?)

Ann sipped scalding, burned coffee, while Molly scraped up dribbles of butterscotch sauce from the outside of her ice cream dish.

"We have mostly pudding at the hospital, though in the fall there are a lot of apples. The hospital has an orchard. Do you have time for me to have a cigarette?"

"Of course. Do you want more coffee or anything?"

"No, I'm fine. It's been such a nice lunch. We could, if you want, go and have a cup of coffee in the hospital coffee-shop. I haven't worked there for some time, but my doctor thinks that I'll be able to go back pretty soon. Or do you have enough time?"

"I guess I do have to go back."

"It's a long drive." Molly put the package of cigarettes and the restaurant matches in her purse, and waited for Ann to finish arranging the change under her saucer. As they left, Ann realized that Molly had not, at any time, looked around the restaurant at other people: she had seen only Ann.

Back at the hospital, Ann searched for a parking space. Molly talked of her work in occupational therapy.

"I've been making a little rug for you, if you want it. It's nothing much. The only color they had was beige and I don't know if that goes with anything you have. Maybe in the bathroom or something?"

A man strode out of the administration building. For a sliver of time Ann waited to see if he were going to release a parking space, and then she said, "That is really nice of you," as she watched the man follow a path which disappeared behind the building.

Beside her, Ann heard harsh gasping. She turned to see that though Molly's face was impassive, her chest heaved, her mouth hung open: blisters of sound cracked out of it. Except for the labor of her chest, Molly sat perfectly still and seemed to be simply waiting for breath to return. Ann tried to find some solace to speak against the scraping, striking sounds; she found that she had stopped breathing, too. Then, assured by Molly's patient containment, Ann was able to measure out words to deny the inadvertent exposure. She did not look at Molly, so that she might recover privately.

"Beige," Ann said over the sound of pain, "is such a useful color." Then, finally, the force of Molly's anguish began to sound like heavy sighs. "Do you really want to do something so ambitious?"

"Well, I just wanted to." Molly spoke, and breathed heavily through her nose when she finished speaking.

"We certainly would be glad to have it, but please don't make it hard for yourself." Ann smiled at Molly.

"I like doing it," Molly said and her breathing again became silent.

The car moved slowly around the turn-around.

"There doesn't seem to be any place to park, so if it's all right with you, I might just leave you here and then be on my way. Will you be all right?"

"Yes, of course. Thanks a lot for coming. And thanks for the lunch."

"You're welcome. It's good to see you. You don't mind going in alone?"

"No, that's fine." Molly let herself out of the car. "Well, goodbye."

"I'll see you soon."

Molly turned and walked carefully, her head erect, toward the yellow brick building. Ann waited, in case Molly should turn and wave. But the black silhouette moved, neck taut, unflinching, straight up the steps, and, without breaking measured rhythm, passed into the building. □

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DAVID GLINES teaches painting and printmaking in the Extension division of UCLA. He confesses to being a native of Iowa.

FICTION BY DAVID GLINES

QUINTET

RAVEL

Ravel's Bolero was not a bolero—no, not a bolero—no bolero, no bolero Ravel's Bolero. It was just called that.

His head was too large for his body they said or his body was too small for his head. Either way.

Ravel was accused of repetition.

He smoked cigarettes.

His Bolero was not a bolero.

Nor was he French. Or Swiss. Or Spanish. Or Basque (as he liked to believe). He was some of these.

When he bought one pair of pajamas he bought two pairs of pajamas then four then in mathematical progression doubling each day for a month the figure swelled to over two million and a half. He took thirty thousand pairs and reversed them. In sequence. One pair of pajamas turned him inside out. Ravel said, in this case, he was Sam, a Jap. Which was wrong and disrespectful.

Ravel took in students. Two students named Ralph Vaughan Williams, who kept offering him tea which he did not want.

At that point in his life Ravel had or had not shaved off his beard but had not written Ravel's Bolero, which is, and was not, a bolero.

His head was too large for his body the doctor said and he should be christened Voltaire and he will not live out the day.

He was very fond of saying he was Basque. Which he was. Stravinsky said he was a *horloge*.

He was constantly accused of repetition and smoking cigarettes. This got him down. So he bought a pair of cashmere pajamas and sweated through the night. This improved his state of mind.

The place he lived in was a sixty percent reduction of something. A Chinese pagoda or Angkor Wat. Ravel himself was a sixty percent reduction. To scale. Not his head, however. Nor the Bolero which was a three hundred per cent expansion of a musical form like a bolero. It was not a bolero in any sense of the word.

Vaughan Williams, clumsy oaf, knocked over Ravel's fake Ming vases and his trashy saltcellars and imitation samovars.

Ravel had to take him to a ship, put him on it, telling him to go home to England. Later, Ravel's student achieved knighthood. Ravel wondered what they meant. In his mind's eye he saw a glittering red ribbon with a gorgeous blue chintz pendant stuck to it, all dangling from Vaughan Williams' neck.

Ravel was very precise.

He loved Spain. Or a part of Spain just across the border. He had been born there. The doctor in Spain said his head was very large. The doctor read Voltaire in Spanish translation and suggested the name for the child. He was convinced that Ravel would not live out the day as had been predicted for Voltaire.

Ravel stayed in Spain a few minutes. But Spain made him nervous. He preferred Spain from afar. He preferred Spain in Morocco and there he heard someone under his window whistling Ravel's Bolero. The cigarette dropped from his mouth.

Ravel had a bird that was not a bird and wrote the Bolero which was not a bolero.

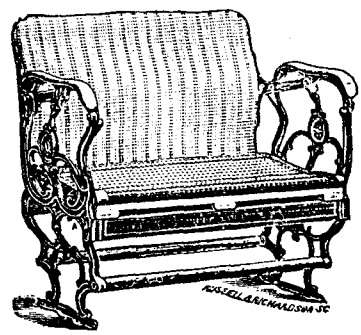
Later he could not speak. There was some kind of enlargement inside his head. His head was opened by yet another doctor who had never read Voltaire and who was very precise as was Ravel and told people outside the door of the operating room: "He is still alive." Asked again the next day he was more reassuring: "He is not dead."

Ravel heard the doctor say this and thought him to say that Vaughan Williams was not dead. He was reminded of tea and tried to make a face.

'He is still alive.'

Ravel had something on his mind. Morocco. And the Bolero with its insistent beat, beat, beat.

He did not live out the day.



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BRAHMS

There was a photograph of Beethoven that Brahms had in his room. Brahms studied it intently—not so much for the image of Beethoven but for the long shadow that he cast. The shadow did not seem to relate properly to Beethoven's form. Brahms pictured himself engulfed in that strange shadow.

Another photograph shows Brahms seated uncomfortably in a chair. His head is turned in one direction, his stomach in another and a cigar between his fingers, almost burnt out and giving the appearance that in the next instant it will burn Brahms' fingers. It also appears that Brahms has a boot on one foot, a shoe on the other.

Brahms and Hanslick had dinner together one night in Brahms' room. They looked at one another. Brahms was about to say that he wished to own and play a guitar but thought it unwise to say so. Hanslick would think the idea frivolous.

During dinner Brahms on two separate occasions reached for the meat and knocked over the salt shaker. Each time Hanslick had to pass the meat to Brahms.

They did not mention Bruckner at any time. On the other hand Dvorak was frequently mentioned. Sometimes with dismay.

Together they looked at the Beethoven photograph. Brahms pointed out the shadow and discussed the shadow at length. Hanslick did not understand his point.

Outside, walking towards the large trees Brahms tripped over the small shrubs. Picking himself up he stumbled on small stones.

Brahms and Hanslick looked at one another. Brahms was about to speak but changed his mind. Hanslick took Brahms by the arm and guided him to the large trees.

STRAVINSKY

Stravinsky entered the mansion of music, announced that he would take it and move right in. He rearranged the furniture, gave the old dump a paint job and hung pictures by Picasso.

Everything went well for Stravinsky in the mansion of music. The grounds and gardens flourished. The soil was acid when he wanted it acid, alkaline when he wanted it alkaline.

In time visitors came calling—some in homage, many in curiosity, a few in fury. Stravinsky never answered their knockings at the front door. They had to go around to the back following the sounds of his hammering and sawing. Interrupted by these visitations he looked up, smiled and said: "I'm making things."

Stravinsky got there first, did as he pleased. He installed Picasso and a few other friends upstairs. They ran in a rat pack. They were beasts of prey, animal robbers who leaped the walls, did as they pleased. They didn't give a damn. They were free!

Stravinsky's trains were on time, the birds sang him to sleep while keeping others awake, he picked his sweet corn at the proper moment, he got the cream off the butter.

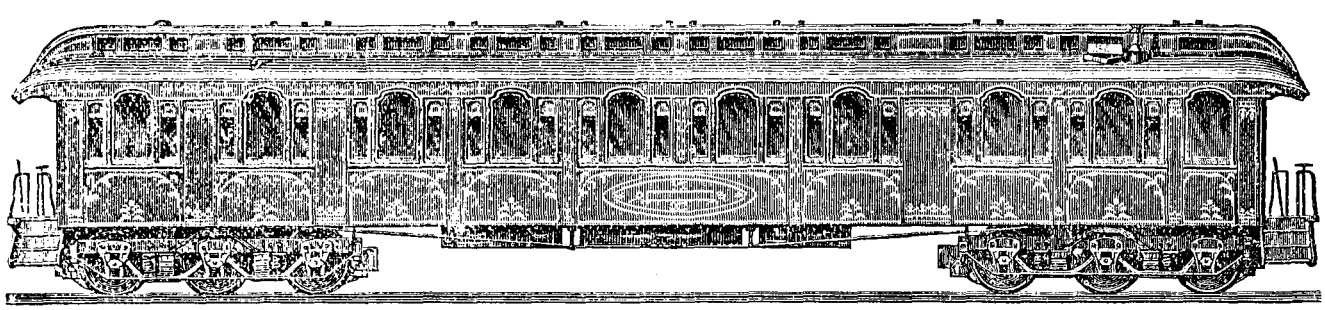
Stravinsky went on and on.

He got served first in restaurants, never stood in line, his watch kept perfect time and he had breakfast in bed. He touched . . . gold! gold! He looked around and there was . . . no one! (That is why he slept with a light burning.)

Stravinsky went on and on. He lived so long that they tried to bring him down. They said his symphonies were no symphonies and additionally he was an insect. His books they thought were glorifying lies and they said he was being craftily cannibalized. Besides which HE was a cannibal. A cannibal and an insect.

They said his soil was now dry and alkaline and he told lies at night to little plucking sounds. And his gluttony was global.

Even then his hammering and sawing could be heard around in the back. Running back to see what he was doing he greeted everyone with a smile: "I'm making things."



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BORODIN

Borodin and his wife are eating their usual hasty meal. He is, as usual, abstracted. She is slowly going mad, her hair wild and unkempt.

"Mikhail . . ." she starts to say.

"My name is Alexander," Borodin says. "A-L-E- . . ."

"Nicolai, do you have a mistress?"

"Alexander," he says patiently.

"Do you?" she asks, trying to brush back her hair.

"No, no, no. Why ask such a question?"

"Your eyebrows are much thicker than they used to be."

He tries to suppress a laugh.

"My good health," he says.

"Exactly, Feodor!" she screams. "Your health is better. Your digestion is better. Your eyebrows are better!!!"

"It is this fine food you serve, my dear," he says in a soothing way. "I will serve myself more."

"Do you have a mistress? Do you have a mistress?"

"You should not allow yourself to get agitated and disturbed. It is not good for you. See for yourself—I have no time except for my music and the chemistry. Always the music and chemistry. That is my work, my life. And the cursed music, I must learn by myself . . ." he stops himself realizing he is raising his voice.

"And," he goes on. "My friends. Ah, my friends. So many friends. And students! Coming and going. And this house. Manuscripts lying about, half-eaten fruit, chickens wandering in and out, people sleeping in the corners, lights burning day and night, windows open, the wind blowing in, dust over everything. It's enough to drive one mad. . . . Oh, I'm sorry I did not mean . . . OW!!!"

"What is it, Stefanovich?"

"I bit down on the spoon. My tooth! My front tooth! Is it broken? I can't bear to look."

"No," she tells him, "the tooth is not broken."

"I must feel for myself. Ah. Ah, it is all right."

"Alexander!"

"Yes?"

"Your vanity, your beauty!"

"Ssh. Everyone is sleeping."

"Your tooth, your eyebrows. You have a mistress."

"You are quite mad."

GRIEG

Grieg tired of being the good little troll and Santa Claus at Christmas time. He despised his image, gritting his teeth and making faces in the mirror in the hope that some fierce look would freeze over the long winter. A few days at best it would last. "Tootache, Edvard?" was the only notice. By spring he was the same as ever. He resumed being good and being good to his wife.

The peasants leaned up against his little hut, snow or no, neglecting their work, just to listen to the clear notes from his piano. Their eyes were glazed, their hands frozen stiff on their hoe handles.

Infuriated, Grieg slammed his little fists down on the keyboard (he liked the chord), rushed out at the peasants, trying in vain to think of a string of profanities that would tarnish his image. No: they took him into their arms and passed him from one to another. "Edvard, Edvard. Our Edvard."

Breaking away he ran into his little hut to try on mean masks, to read up on hirsute treatments that would turn one into a werewolf. He read *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* for clues to the double life. But he always confused which was which.

Nothing worked. "I'm only five feet tall!"

At night he rubbed mud on his face, applied the skin from the back leg of a frog, tried to digest the paw of a wolf. Something, anything!

The snow he packed around his head to deaden his kindly thoughts. What people thought were his flowing locks was hardpack snow he had brought in by moon-worshipping Laplanders. Everyone saw through this.

"If I could only belch," he declaimed, "in public!"

He tried running away from home after studying the free wide ranging habits of the timber wolf. He tired out in the pines only a kilometer from grandma's cottage by the lake.

"Darn, double darn!" he yelled in obvious pain and exhaustion. Too, his digestion was shot from the wolf's paw.

"Grandma, bells ringing, little birds, spinning wheels, remembrances—" he sneered. "I want to throw up." No one listened to his complaints. "Edvard, Edvard. Our Edvard."

He then tried growing canines and a furry coat. He studied and practiced animal guttural sounds. Determined to make a breakthrough he charged off into the woods to live with the animals.

"By god, I'll run with the deer, snarl with the wolves and hug a bear!"

The animals took to Grieg at first but the novelty soon wore off for them.

"You're no fun. You're too nice. You're too short."

Grieg left and was never invited back. Lifting his head, he parted his locks and very successfully howled at the moon. Trudging back home he felt cleansed. His wife, grandma and the peasants assembled to greet him. "Edvard, Edvard. Our Edvard." □

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The Development of the Wolf in North America

by Barry Lopez

Photographs by John Bauguess

It is September in Alaska. The wind pours down Kaiyuh Pass through orphan trees out across Innoko flats, like water, anxious; and ragged with smells. Invisible. Quiet. You can only detect it by arranging your ear, like the mouth of a pop bottle, in the current.

Dusk. The air is still. It settles like dew. It wipes my cheeks, brushes the smell against boulders in the creek. It eases into openings in my clothing, lies asleep against my skin. It seeps out when I roll over. It wanders downvalley poking in crevices where insects look up. It runs into the wolf 's nose and he opens his eyes. He is gone.

The wind goes to sleep.

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Begin

Palm trees grow in North Dakota. Oxyclaenus scans the horizon with quiet grey eyes. He moves like a pig and is the size of a wharf rat. He can pick up a beetle with his front foot and examine it before he eats.

The ocean pushes on into Illinois.

Bull-necked Miacis gives way to Cynodictis, who looks like an otter with his wide, flat feet and his long blunt tail. Cynodictis roams the shores of a lake in Wyoming, slips clumsily through the reeds, making far too much noise. But his prey moves slowly too.

In the lower Miocene he can no longer pick up things with his feet, but his claws are still sharp. He can climb trees. The wind whips swirls of grey-brown dust around the flanks of Cynodesmus. The land bridge from Asia is damp, but clear of the waves.

Tomarctus emerges. He moves quickly over a plain of red clay in Colorado. He looks back over his shoulder for enemies. He travels with friends. The legs are longer, the feet more deft. The dew claw hangs on the hind foot. The brain has taken on an edge.

The final parents, Canis, lope along a ridge in Oklahoma. The camels below are fast but cannot run forever. Canis can run. He can run almost forever. But he selects. He begins to conserve. He takes the weakest one, like lightning in the trees.

The forehead will rise, the face take on expression. The ear will become keen, the nose broad. The wolf will sit on the prairie at night and sing.

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In the creation legend of the Pawnee a great council was held to which all the beings who dwelled in the heavens were invited. For a reason that no one remembers the brightest star in the southern sky, the Wolf Star, was not invited. He watched from a distance, silent and angry.

In the time after the great council he directed his resentment and jealousy at the Evening Star and at The Storm That Comes from the West. When The Storm came down on the earth to inspect the work of the creation, to see how it was coming, he had with him a whirlwind bag. Inside the bag he was carrying the first people. When The Storm stopped to rest he would let the people out, and they would make camp and hunt buffalo.

The Wolf Star watched all this. One morning he sent a wolf down to follow The Storm out of the West. One evening when The Storm out of the West went to sleep the wolf stole his whirlwind bag. He ran far away with it. He thought there might be something good to eat inside. When he opened it up all the people came out and set up camp. But when they looked around, they saw no buffalo to hunt. When they realized it was only a wolf that had let them out and not The Storm they were angry. They chased the wolf down and killed him.

When The Storm out of the West found them and saw what they had done he was sad. He told them that in killing the wolf they had brought Death onto the earth. There had been no plan for this. It had been the plan at the great council that all the people would live forever. Now this would not be. People would have to die.

The Storm told them to skin the wolf and to make a sacred bundle of the pelt which they were always to carry with them and by which they would have the powers of the wolf and be known as the Skidi Pawnee, the Wolf People.

Many years later, when men spoke in many different ways and had to talk with each other in sign, their fingers did the same thing to say "Pawnee" or "wolf" or "scout". It was with the other signs they made that you knew what they meant. But it was also said that on the prairies north and south of The River of the Geese Laying In that no one scouted as well as the Skidi and there was really no difference at all among the words.

The Wolf Star continues to watch from the southern sky. The Pawnee call him *Tskirixki-tiulats*, Wolf-He-Is-Deceived, because the Wolf Star rises just before the morning star and fools the wolves into howling, thinking first light is near. In this way he reminds the others that he was forgotten.

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Continue

In 1830 there was a famous siege of wolves that took place in New Hampshire, near Tamworth.

This region, during the first third of the nineteenth century, abounded in moose, deer, bears, wolves, and panthers. On the evening of November 14 couriers rode furiously through Tamworth and the surrounding towns, proclaiming that countless numbers of wolves had come down from the Sandwich Mountains and had established themselves in the woods on Marston Hill. All able-bodied males, from ten years old to eighty, were therefore summoned to report to Marston Hill by daylight on the following morning.

Marston Hill was crowned by about twenty acres of woods, entirely surrounded by cleared land. Sentinels were posted around the hill and numerous fires were lighted to prevent the wolves from effecting a return to the mountains. All through the night a continuous and hideous howling was kept up by the besieged wolves and answering howls came from the slopes of the great mountains. The shivering besiegers were regaled with food and hot coffee furnished by the women of the country-side throughout their long lonely watch.

All night long reinforcements kept arriving. By daylight there were six hundred men and boys on the scene, armed with rifles, shotguns, pitchforks and clubs. A council of war was held and a plan of campaign agreed upon. General Quimby, of Sandwich, a war-seasoned veteran, was made commander-in-chief. The general immediately detailed a thin line of sharpshooters to surround the hill, while the main body formed a strong line ten paces in the rear of the skirmishers. The sharpshooters were then commanded to advance towards the center, that is towards the top of the hill. The firing began. The reports of the rifles and the unearthly howling of wolves made the heavens ring. The beleaguered animals, frenzied by the ring of flame and noise, and perhaps by wounds, made repeated attempts to break through the lines, but all in vain. They were driven back into the woods, where they unceasingly continued to run, making it difficult for the marksmen to hit them. In about an hour the order was given for the main line to advance, which was done.

Closing in on the center, the circular battle-line at last massed itself in a solid body on the hilltop, where for the first time in sixteen hours the troops raised their voices above a whisper, bursting out into wild hurrahs of victory. Joseph Gilman records that few of the besieged wolves escaped. But the historian of Carroll County maintains that the greater part of the frantic animals broke through the line of battle and escaped to the mountains whence they had come. Returning to the great rock on which the commander-in-chief had established headquarters, the victorious warriors laid their trophies at the feet of their commander—four immense wolves—and once more gave thrice three thundering cheers.

The little army then formed column, with the general in a barouche at its head. In the barouche also reposed the bodies of the slain wolves. After a rapid march of thirty-five minutes, the triumphant volunteers entered the village and formed a hollow square in front of the hotel, the general, mounted on the top of his barouche, being in the center of the square.

What a cheering and waving of handkerchiefs by the ladies in windows and on balconies! General Quimby then made a speech befitting the occasion, after which the thirsty soldiers stampeded to the bar to assuage the awful thirst engendered by twenty mortal hours of abstinence and warfare.

—Charles Edward Beals, Jr.,
Passaconaway in the White Mountains

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A price was placed on the heads of the following and in the latter part of the nineteenth century they were hunted down and killed by drifters, bounty hunters, government trappers and naturalists:

Three Toes of Harding County, South Dakota
Old Whitey, Bear Springs Mesa, Colorado
Big Foot, Lane County, Colorado
The Phantom Wolf, south-central Montana
The Truxton Wolf, Arizona
Lobo, King of Curumpaw, northern New Mexico
White Wolf, Pine Ridge, South Dakota
Rags the Digger, Cathedral Bluffs, Colorado
The Traveler, west-central Arkansas
Virden Wolf, Virden, Manitoba

Old Lefty, Burns Hole, Colorado
Custer Wolf, Custer, South Dakota
Aquila Wolf, western Arizona
Cody's Captive, Cheyenne, Wyoming
Mountain Billy, Medora, South Dakota
Sycan Wolf, Sycan Marsh, Oregon
Black Buffalorunner, Carberry, Manitoba
The Greenhorn Wolf, southern Colorado
Three Toes of the Apishapa, Colorado
Werewolf of Nut Lake, Ft. Qu'Apelle, Saskatchewan

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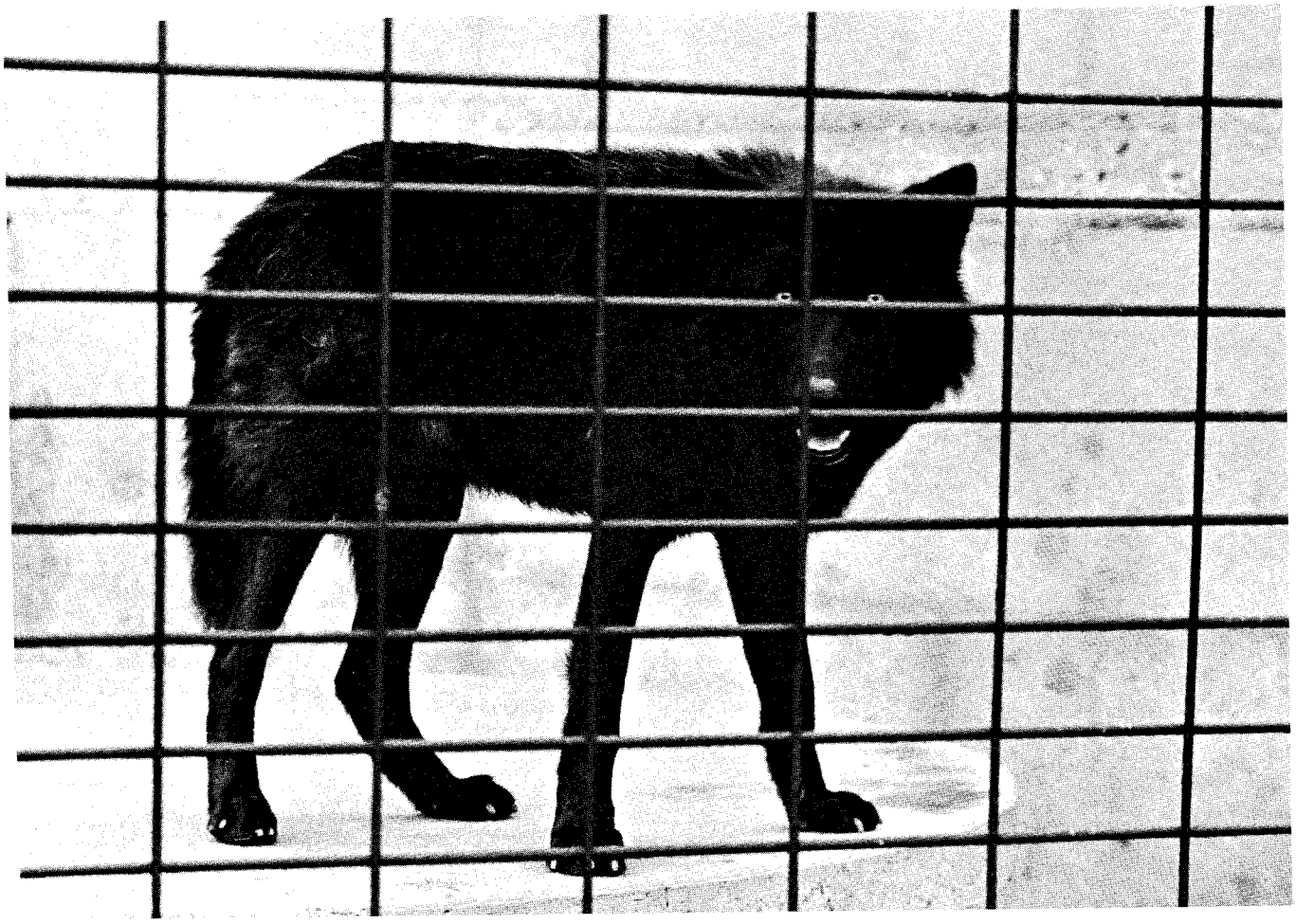
Finish

I read about that law when it came out, that you can't hunt them from an airplane with a shotgun. That's a good law, but you know they do it anyway. You can buy anything.

My son has never seen a wolf. Once, three years ago, I took him to a place up around Puget Sound somewhere. I heard they had one hundred wolves at that place. Huh. I didn't know what to say. They all had . . . there was something wrong with all their legs, the way they walked. In these little pens. Their bellies hung down like this. Three dollars to get in, the damn place falling apart. I don't know what the boy thought.

It hurts like hell you know.

Raven Bear



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A STORY BY KIRBY WILKINS

Indian Camp Exit

That was the summer of the freeway, when Charlie would come into the Jack of Diamonds to relieve the kid at four-thirty, and by the time Charlie had taken off his black bowler, hung up his black suit jacket, and rolled up his sleeves, the kid had his apron off and was out the door. Dirty glasses, a dirty sink . . . the kid didn't care. And since the motel bunch had bought the Jack of Diamonds and started hiring college kids like this one, who had worked in those slick bars in Tahoe and Reno, Charlie didn't care so much himself. They thought they knew shit, but they didn't. They were all like this kid, smart but stupid; you'd never catch one putting in an instant beyond his time. It was just a job for them. That's what they would say until it was too late, and they found out it had been their life, not just a job.

At five-fifteen, Tom Quick and Wally Moon came in from the freeway job, and Charlie was still mad. When he set down their beers and Wally Moon asked, "What do you know, Charlie?" Charlie told him:

"You know that goddamned motel bunch?"

Meaning the Gold City Motel newly built at the off ramp Wally and Tom were then in the process of grading. Since they had worked on the motel, too, they didn't even nod acknowledgment for Charlie to go on:

"They want to put a television in here."

"Yeah," Tom Quick said. "How about the dice, Charlie?"

Charlie continued talking as he brought up the leather dice cups, "I told them they could have their college kids, that you have to pick up after like they are infants . . . did you ever get a decent drink from one of them kids?"

"No," Tom Quick said, holding his dice cup and waiting patiently for Charlie to stop so they could get on with the game. And that was true enough, you never did get a decent drink from those kids.

"Well, I said they could have their goddamned kids, it was their business, but I wouldn't work with a TV. If they wanted their TV, I was quitting."

"Quitting!" Wally Moon, who had also been waiting patiently with his dice cup, looked sharply at Charlie. "You can't quit."

And now neither he nor Tom made a move, because this was serious. Charlie couldn't quit because he was an institution in Indian Camp. For one thing he was half Indian, which made him the only one left in town. But more important, he had tended bar at the Jack of Diamonds for forty odd years, and *that* was something—to sit on the same stool as your father before you, at the same scarred redwood bar, thirty feet long and two feet thick, that had been there for over seventy years, and for the price of a single be poured double drinks by the same bartender. Why, there were people came to the Diamond from as far away as San Francisco, it was that famous. So there was no question of Charlie quitting.

"It'd be empty as church in here, if you quit."

"Maybe," Charlie said, unable to see Wally or Tom with his badly failing eyes, but knowing he had their interest now. "Maybe it would, but they have their ideas."

"So what did they say?"

"That they'd wait."

"Wait!" Agitated now, still holding the idle dice cups, the two men drained their glasses, pushing the empties toward Charlie. "Wait for what?"

"Wait until they don't have to worry about me anymore."

"They said that?"

"Sure, it's what they meant." He refused money for the fresh beers by holding up his hand. "They don't need me. As soon as you fellows get that freeway finished, they won't need any of us."

"Come on, Charlie, that's crazy. When the freeway's finished, who'll stop in town? They'll stop at that restaurant and bar at the motel. They'll need you more than ever to fill this place up."

But now the five-thirty rush had started, and Charlie had to move down the bar. "Well, they've got plans," he said, "you watch and see."

The trouble was, you couldn't exactly ignore a warning like

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that because Charlie had a way of being right. Even though he was so old and about three-quarters blind, he still knew more about the town and country than almost anybody, and what he said had a way of happening. On the other hand, there wasn't much they could do about it right then, and Charlie was too busy to talk for awhile, so they went ahead with their game of liars' dice.

"Four aces," Tom Quick said.

"You're a lying sonofabitch," Wally Moon told him. And he was.

So once again they thumped the leather cups down against the old redwood bar top, lifting the edges cautiously so the other couldn't see how the dice had spilled out, and then lied about their imaginary poker hands . . . while Charlie moved behind the bar with that deceptive ease of his, that didn't need eyes, in his bow tie and starched shirt and black trousers held up with suspenders, not able to see the customers whose glasses he filled so unerringly and generously.

Actually, Charlie wasn't so worried about the TV, even though, at first, he thought it the omen he was waiting for that summer, the signal to quit because his time had come. That was the day he would walk away from the Diamond for the last time, walk out the south end of town past the Gold City Motel and the godawful junk there—the wagon wheels and hitchrails and horseshoes and branding irons and gold pans—junk three years old and giving off heat like the county dump. They thought it looked like the old days, but it looked like shit. He'd walk past the big new bar, with the out-of-town cars pulled up in front, and he wouldn't even turn his head. He would spend his last twelve months alone in the cabin, splitting wood and stacking it under the window, as he had always done, where the smell would come in through the hot nights and lingering days down through fall. When it got cold, he would feed the stove and watch the long nights—the last twelve moons.

Days he would sit on the porch and watch Wally and Tom and them hurry to finish the freeway before winter, not even thinking that they were hurrying their own winter. He'd watch the trucks and graders pushing the dirt around, and then the big paving machines would come, and he'd just wait for them to put up a big sign that would say INDIAN CAMP EXIT. Then it would be finished, and he would lie in bed and listen to the big cars roaring straight into the mountains, up ten thousand feet beyond Swallowtail, like a river going backwards, and Indian Camp just an eddy along the shore. Just him and the dogs and cats and goats and the last twelve moons.

But the TV wasn't the omen, that's what he was thinking, when he heard Buck Summers' voice in all that crowd, and fixed him a big martini on the rocks. How many summers had Buck said that his arm was dead, that this was absolutely the last year he would pitch softball? And here he was again, with his cap pushed back on his head, though Charlie couldn't see it, and his big beer gut, though Charlie couldn't see that either, having won another ball game—that you could tell from his voice. Now Buck was somebody you could talk to, he was a teacher out at the high school, and he really listened. And strange as it seemed after all these years, Charlie felt, right then, that he wanted to tell Buck what was on his mind. Even as he heard himself say:

"You want a goddamn TV in here?" he wanted to tell Buck what was on his mind. He wanted to tell about the omen that would come for him that summer, to quit the Diamond, and how the whole town would change. There was nothing anybody could do about it, because he had studied all his life how the changes accumulated, like the heat of summer, and then one day it was finished, whatever it was you took for granted and didn't pay any attention to.

"Now who would ever watch a TV in here," Buck said. "Are you getting bored?"

So lives and towns turned strangely, suddenly, and only afterwards did most people notice. "You wait and see," Charlie said. "There are people who want a TV."

Buck would understand that, how when your time was finished you went into lagtime, that's how he thought of it, like the end of summer when the days were hottest. It's when the spirit was strongest, and what you did then was take the time that belonged to you. You weren't afraid of the end, because it was the highest point of your life, the brightest, hottest days before the end. It was lagtime, and he was sure that when he quit, he would take Indian Camp with him into the final twelve moons.

"Why?" Buck asked.

"Why? Because they want to watch people walk around on the moon. Does that make any sense? You've seen people walk all your life, what's the point watching them walk up there? I haven't got time for it. Let somebody else look at those pictures. The moon's good enough for me as it is."

"I don't know about that, Charlie." You could tell Buck had finished the martini, and because he must be thirsty from the ballgame, and always drank martinis too fast to be good for him, Charlie drew a beer and pushed it across the counter. "I just can't look at the moon anymore," Buck said, "without thinking of them up there."

"If you stay away from TV you can. You can't see them up there without the TV."

"But that doesn't make any difference, Charlie. Once you know it, you know. That's the funny thing about human consciousness, there's no going back." He sipped at the beer, but Charlie knew he wanted another martini and began to prepare one.

Human consciousness, he didn't know about that, but Buck was probably right. It would be like lagtime, there wasn't any help for that, either. The hot days could fool you, but there was no going back once it was over. You learned that much in a lifetime. But then he had an unpleasant thought: if Buck was right about them up there, walking on the moon, then it wasn't just the end of Indian Camp and the Jack of Diamonds that was coming. Still he heard himself saying:

"I don't have to watch those pictures. They don't have anything to do with me. The moon I can see with my own eyes is good enough; after a whole life, I don't even understand that much. What do I need more?"

But he understood well enough to know that, even though it was different each time, the moon always came back, and it wouldn't matter how many people they put up there, or how many freeways and motels they built. You just had to believe that. The sun and moon taught that much; as long as there had been men to see them, they always came back.

"It's so topsy-turvy now, Charlie, that there's not a thing you can depend on anymore."

"Except death," Charlie said, to his surprise.

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"Not even that. Pretty soon they'll be freezing you, or pickling you for eternity. Not even that."

So he never did warn Buck that the end was close—for all of them—and all the rest of that summer he waited, alone, for his omen. Even so, when it finally came, he wasn't at all prepared.

He'd walked home under the October full moon, so bright that even with his bad eyes he could see Swallowtail peak standing east across the foothills, and he came home full of moon and chill—there was frost in the air—knowing that the first snows would gather by the dark of the moon. Not down in Indian Camp, but up high, he was sure the Pass would be closed before the moon came full again. It would be the early winter of the freeway.

The cats and dogs were waiting for him out front, and the goats, tied out back of the cabin, were prancing in the moonlight. He stayed out back awhile talking to the animals, the cats rubbing back and forth against his legs, the dogs fawning and growling, all of them touchy as aspen leaves coming off the trees around Swallowtail. It was the moon and the month. "Now, now," he said aloud. "It's going around again. You can't remember, that's all. What do you care? Huh, Sam. What do you care?"

At the sound of his name, Sam came up off the dust and looked into Charlie's face. "What do you care?" The dog licked his hands. "You don't know October from nothing, do you?" And Sam didn't. He looked up, questioning. "But you know the moon, huh?" Sam groaned a little.

Then because Sam had been singled out, Sarah came up and butted in on the conversation, and her sudden movement made the cats hump up and hiss a little, for practice. The goats, straining at their ropes reaching for grass ends, pretended not to, but they listened also.

Sarah had been his wife's name, Sam his son's—wherever he was—but Charlie didn't think about any of that, so full was he of moon and the season some called October. What did they know about the cycle? Only names. But he knew that this was the night when all of them took a turn steeper into fall and winter. The animals knew, but not with their heads. What a blessing for the animals! And he cuffed the heads of the two listening dogs a little, so they whined and wagged their tails.

Almost three in the morning, he supposed, but he'd never know for sure—sitting there straight and dry and brittle in the westering moon, with the animals, resilient and pliable, curving about him as if he were a post. And he made a shadow like a post, back up against the cabin. From where he was sitting, he could see the level grade of the freeway like a flat black wall in the moonlight. Soon they would pour the concrete and make it like a river going back into the mountains; cars would pass Indian Camp with only a sound in the night, like the sound of water down a mild rapids. He would listen during the year's turning and the spring moons. He would listen.

That night he was restless, he felt it in his bones when he woke. But he didn't remember the dream until he milked the goat. It wasn't a goat but a blind horse stumbling down a gully in back of him. He was somewhere in the foothills in a white, seasonless light, alone, when he heard the hooves. The instant he turned, to see the horse crashing down the gully toward him, he knew the animal was blind. Then his body went into the slow motion of dreams, moving without force, as the horse blundered down on him—purposeless and blind. Awake, he knew that it was the blindness of the horse which terrified him—because there was no way to deceive a blind horse.

Still, it wasn't until he reached town that afternoon, walking past the Gold City Motel, current owners of the Jack of Diamonds, that he understood what the dream was telling him. His time had begun. He must quit the Diamond.

"Hey, Charlie." Voices. He lifted the gate, feeling his way behind the bar, listening to the hooves of the blind horse. He wasn't afraid to die, but the dream frightened him in a strange way. It was not the horse itself but his own recognition of its blindness that had paralyzed him in the gully. It was his own mind. And he remembered what Buck had said: once the mind knows, it can't go back. And now he knew that the horse was blind, and that up there, over his head, they were walking around on the moon.

The kid was all packed up ready to leave, not wasting a minute. Charlie's eyes, slow focusing in the dimness, began to pick out shapes behind the bar. "Bourbon-hi, Charlie. . . . Pull us a couple of schooners there, Charlie."

"Where are you going?" he said to the kid.

"I'm off. You're late." The kid spoke reproachfully because Charlie had never been late before, and he took it personally, the way he did everything else.

Standing there with his hat still on his head, with his coat still buttoned tight over the black tie and starched shirt, and with his polished black shoes pointing straight ahead, Charlie looked up at the kid. "I want you to stay tonight."

"Hey, I can't, Charlie. It's Saturday night. I got things to do." It was the kid's whining-voice.

"What's the matter over there, Charlie? Give us the dice." That was Wally and Tom.

They'd have to hire somebody nights, that was all. "Go ahead then," he said to the kid. After all, he had a whole year to himself, what difference did this one night make? He'd tell them to hire somebody nights. The kid didn't waste a minute. He was gone.

Charlie picked up two of the big beer glasses and started to fill them slowly. When he turned back to the bar with the full glasses, he was ready for his last shift.

"How's your luck, Charlie?" Wally Moon had the dice cups and wanted to roll him for drinks. "You're awful quiet tonight."

"Just give me a minute, Wally, I'm behind here." And he poured out the bourbon-hi.

After forty-three years, he figured he should make a formal resignation, so the next day he went to see the manager of the Gold City Motel. For awhile he stood outside the restaurant looking in at the shadows shifting behind the tinted glass, shadows which, had he been able to see better, would have resolved themselves into waitresses dressed as cowgirls carrying menus shaped like horseshoes. He began to feel uncomfortable and confused standing outside, so he went into what he thought was the main part of the building and found himself standing beside a swimming pool with people in bathing suits lying all around him and a tremendous amount of light and noise coming from the pool. But when he tried to turn back the way he had come, he found himself in a long, dim hallway, where he could not see at all after the bright swimming pool,

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and he had to feel his way along the wall until he heard a girl's voice: "Are you looking for someone?"

"The manager," he said.

"He's in the main office."

He felt helpless and demoralized in this huge motel, and wanted to walk away as fast as he could, but he still felt responsible for his formal resignation and forced himself to ask: "Where's that, please?"

He followed her directions very carefully and found the registration desk, where he stopped and stared at the man there.

"Are you a guest?" the man asked.

"No," Charlie said. "I just want to talk to the manager."

"Look, he's pretty busy, what do you want?"

"I just want to see the manager."

"What's your name then?"

"Charlie Stone."

"Will he know you?"

"Yes. I work for him." For the first time in his life, asking to see this employer, he felt ashamed of his work.

The man went away and came back. "Is it important, he wants to know?"

And now, he couldn't help himself, he had to get away. "No, it's not important. Tell him I'm quitting. Tell him he'll need a new bartender tonight."

"Oh," the man said. "Now I see. You work at the downtown bar."

"That's right."

Then another voice, from someone who had been listening the whole time, said, "What's this, Charlie, what are you talking about?"

"Are you the manager?"

"Yes."

"Then you'd better get a new bartender tonight, or close the Diamond until you do."

Now the manager's voice was distinct and clear. "That's a little sudden isn't it? I'm not authorized to make those decisions. It seems to me you could have given us a little warning."

"I didn't know until yesterday."

"It's all that urgent? Couldn't you give us a few days to find somebody?"

"I haven't got any more time."

The manager paused. "Are you sick then?"

"No."

"Have you told anyone else?"

"No."

"You mean you can simply walk out on all your friends like this?"

"What difference does it make, today or tomorrow, it's all the same. The Diamond is yours. Indian Camp is yours. It's all finished."

Once again the manager paused. "Now, now, he said. "I think you're a little upset." You could hear his change of tone as he saw Charlie's weakness. "You know how important you are to this community. Everybody knows you." Which was an outright lie, because Charlie had never seen this man before. But as he stood listening to this liar, he realized that in only a few hours Wally and Buck and Tom and the others would be coming into the Diamond, and he owed them a goodbye. He owed these people nothing.

"Look," the manager said, "if you want to quit, maybe you could use a little extra money . . . you know, while you train a new man . . . I'm authorized. . . ."

"Never mind," Charlie cut him off. "I'll stay a few days."

If he had not lost control of his mind, it might never have happened; but once he realized that he was afraid of himself, not the blind horse, that he no longer knew what was true, he did not look forward to his final twelve months alone. And after the first night, when word got around town and people he hadn't seen for months came to the Diamond, saying, "Stay on, Charlie, what else have you got to do?" he agreed to stay a whole month till the end of November.

For several weeks, he was sure he had done the right thing, for he felt the town come together as he remembered it in the old days, the bar crowded and friendly, like a big party among friends. Even so, there wasn't a single soul he could tell about the blind horse, which had given him only twelve moons to prepare for the darkness, so that this November moon, which grew in the sky like a huge icicle, was a momentous thing for him, it was a gift of his life to the town, a month for them to be free of lagtime. Or so he thought until, like a distant swollen river, he began to hear another sound in their voices.

One night, late, when he was quite drunk, Wally Moon broke down blubbering: "Goddamn it, Charlie, they can't do this to us."

"What's that?" Charlie asked, thinking that he knew what Wally wanted to say.

"You know . . . this . . . everything . . . the way everything is these days."

And then Charlie realized his error. It was his own fear that he heard. Instead of a final blaze of spirit, hot and clean, there was this self-pity. By staying on, he had degraded all of them. It was in many voices, like that big swollen river, feeling sorry and confused because the Diamond was going away forever.

"They didn't have to do this. . . ." Wally said, too drunk to be clear about anything, and Charlie cut him off:

"*They* didn't do anything. It's us. It's our own minds."

But Wally couldn't hear, he just went on, "No, Charlie, all that outside money; who needed a freeway anyway? They only want to get to skiing or Reno. They don't give a damn about us."

In losing control of his own life, he had in fact taken Indian Camp with him, but not in the way he expected, not with pride but in sorrow, in pity for themselves. They had seen the big sign on the freeway: INDIAN CAMP EXIT 1 MILE GAS FOOD LODGING.

And two other signs opposite Charlie's cabin, although he had to walk right to the edge of the freeway to read what they said. He would never forget. One had an arrow pointing straight up to the sky, and it said KIT CARSON PASS. The other had an arrow curving south, away from town, and it said, INDIAN CAMP. And that was that.

It just took a sign that size for most people to see the end and get frightened enough to want things to stay the same. They wanted the Diamond. But they'd adjust. They'd just have to live with it the way he had for eighty years, with being half Indian and no place to go anymore.

So now, as the November moon shriveled, grew sharp, thin and old in the sky, he realized that he had made the worst mistake of his life, not to have quit clean when his whole life

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had prepared a final act of will. To have let his own mind betray him. Instead of giving life, he had taken it. What terrible, terrible pride to think that he could change the big cycle. To think that he could give anything. You accepted, even your own mind if it got loose on you, you did not give or take.

So it was no surprise in the last week when the motel bunch brought in a TV and the new kid turned it on. He couldn't see it happen, but he could sense very well from the silence, that every eye in the Diamond had lifted toward the screen. He stood with his back to the TV hearing its noise behind him, the silence in front, before he turned and began to run his hands around the edge of the bright screen, pushing and twisting at knobs until the light went out. The silence continued, the kid standing there, until he heard Buck's voice say, "I'll never forget that, Charlie."

The TV stood blank and silent that last week. And at last, as if there were some general understanding of his shame, and their own, the crowds began to thin. He could feel people moving away from him, as if his whole lifetime were dissolving in water, and he was left with nothing but the puzzle of a mind which turned in doubt upon itself. But he still had eleven moons to study the matter, and to watch the days veeing into dead winter and bellying back into summer, and the moons, tied to earth, following close beneath the shifting sun. But he should have expected the extent of his betrayal.

The lost moon went inside and gnawed at him, and when the first real cold hit over Christmas and he couldn't get warm, he knew what had happened. Even with the stove red hot, some days, he had to wear his overcoat. And then, after watching the last scrap of old moon rising over Swallowtail in the bitter early hours, he missed new moon. He slept right through it into broad winter daylight.

Once that happened he began to sleep more and more. He dozed in the days and slept well before the Diamond would have closed and continued sleeping past dawn. He was very careful whenever people stopped by not to let them know in any way. He served them coffee from the black tin pot, as always, kept himself neat, and his voice sounded like always. He didn't think they knew.

In the second quarter, he bought his last few groceries and watched the moon set down a clear cold sky into the winter fogs over the San Joaquin Valley. He was in a peculiar state of mind, like the night sky, clear and empty. So there were footprints up there in the dust; so he was dying because he knew the horse was blind. An impasse: the moon looked the same, but he knew that it was different. Then he noticed that the animals had begun to stay very close to him, and he realized the full extent of what he had done to himself—he would never see summer or spring, or even the full dead of winter. There was very little time left to understand what had gone wrong.

Buck Summers stopped the next day after school, and Charlie couldn't prepare himself. He wasn't in bed, fortunately, but it was unmade, the cabin was a little untidy, and he realized that it must be unbearably hot. He had brought in a lot of wood because he was afraid that he might be too weak in the last days, and it must have looked strange—half the kitchen filled with wood. He was sitting close to the stove when Buck came in.

"Are you okay, Charlie?"

"Sure, I'm okay," Charlie's voice said. It was the voice he kept inside so people wouldn't know, and now it spoke all by itself. Buck watched him steadily, and Charlie felt a little embarrassed because of his predicament: the voice talking to Buck as it always had, while his mind sat like cold water in his head.

"Can I do anything, Charlie?"

The voice replied: "Maybe you could look in tomorrow evening." He was surprised to hear that it would be so soon.

"Of course," Buck said.

Charlie expected Buck to ask why, but he didn't. Either the voice was stronger than he thought, or else Buck already knew. It was the animals, of course. They might be shut in for days otherwise. And the goats would need to be milked. "The animals." He wasn't sure whether he said that aloud or not.

"It sure isn't the same without you," Buck said. "The bastards are going to remodel. Can you imagine remodeling the Diamond?"

"Oh?" The voice didn't seem very interested, although he remembered clearly how important the end of the Diamond had seemed, for Indian Camp as well as him, but now he saw that footprints on the moon, freeways, motels . . . nothing changed but the mind. Lagtime, that was all fine for summer and winter, but what happened inside the mind was different. He was so confused.

"The same ones that did the motel," Buck said.

"Naturally," the voice replied. "Of course they would." It was carrying on quite a conversation.

There was less light in the room, and Buck had taken off his coat and loosened his tie. He must have come straight from school. It was growing dark outside, of course, that's why there was less light; it happened early at this time of year. "Times change," the voice said.

"That's for sure," Buck said. "Actually, that's what we had in mind, a little party next Saturday before they remodel the Diamond. Sort of a . . . you know, a remembrance."

"Remember? No, no. Let it pass, son." The voice had said "son," Charlie heard it clearly in his ears and knew that Buck had, too, because he heard him shuffle nervously in his chair.

"That's foolish, Charlie. There's little enough left to remember, and you're important to a lot of people."

"But you said . . ." Charlie had the feeling that what the voice would say next would be quite interesting. There was a long pause, and then it said, "You said, no matter what happens out there, you said, the mind changed and there was no going back."

He could feel Buck leaning toward him. "Are you all right?"

"Didn't you say that?" The voice was very insistent. "The moon is out there, but here, in my head, it's different because of the TV. Because they're walking around up there."

Buck laughed, but it wasn't his natural laugh. "Well, you don't need to worry about that anymore, they've come back home and left a bunch of junk up there."

"But our minds are different. Forever."

"Yes, I guess that's right. The mind goes one way, like a fox-tail in a dog's foot. Or like a stream . . . maybe that's a better analogy."

"Then there's no hope. It won't come back." He didn't care so much personally, but apparently that damned voice had to be sure what Buck had said. And there did seem to be some special pressure inside of him.

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"What's that?" Buck asked.

"The moon. It always came back, but now it won't anymore. It's lost."

There was a long silence, and although Charlie couldn't remember lighting the lamps, some light came back into the room, and he could see that Buck was worried. He just had to shut up.

"I wouldn't think about it too much, Charlie, or pay too damned much attention to me. Nobody's found an answer to these things."

"But it always came back, son. Now it won't."

"Ah shit, Charlie, don't worry about it." You could tell how bad Buck felt, but the thing was Charlie felt very calm himself. He just couldn't shut up.

"I was wrong for eighty years."

"That's utter nonsense, Charlie. Where would that leave the rest of us? If anybody's right, it's you."

"I'm sorry, son."

Buck was silent again, feeling bad, and then he said, "No, I'm the one who's sorry."

Then, as abruptly as it started, the voice stopped, and either then or a little bit later, Buck went away, and Charlie lay down on the unmade bed. He realized then that he wore only his underwear—no tie, no starched shirt, no hat. The whole entire time, he had talked to Buck in his long underwear.

He stretched out and the cats came up beside him. He slept fitfully until the moon came down through the window, getting toward full, and he woke and saw it clearly, as clearly as he had ever seen it. He felt the cats beside him and heard the dogs whimpering outside. The moon.

He turned his head, staring out the window, where the light grew brighter and brighter, filling the cabin. It was the moon, oval like an eye, staring in at him. Eyes like his own had looked back at earth and what had they seen? The moon stared right through the window, blinding, into his head. What had they seen?

Then he heard the sound of water outside the cabin, like a mild rapids, and he knew the answer. The mind wasn't a foxtail, each one separate; it was like water, everywhere at once. How else did Buck think water got upstream in the first place? It was everywhere at once. The horse was blind, not just for him alone in a gully, but for everyone. Those footprints up there, on the moon come inside his head like a big oval eye, were his own. What those eyes saw was the earth going around again. That's all. Just what the sun and moon always taught. There was no fear. And he went back to sleep soundly.

Not long after the moon set, the cats jumped hissing off the bed and ran into the kitchen, and the dogs started to whine, as though they were moon struck, as though it were full moon. Whining and yelping.

It was the blind horse. And it had terrified them, too, not knowing which way to turn, and no Charlie to reassure them. The cats got way up on the top cupboard, in the dust gathered for years, and the dogs ran around the cabin snarling and biting at each other in panic.

And every once in awhile, whenever a car raced up the new freeway toward the high snowfields, there came the sound, as of a mild rapids in a large easy river. □

PETER FELLOWES

THE REMINISCENCE

How could she, fanning
her sharp ilia half a quarter
more, know entertaining a fond
thought of him would saddle
his short rump to her; the instant
that first knot of tissue
tightened, he knew her mind.

Lie still; blue veins of comfort
gorge your heavens, a flushed
sun seals your side; and if
the patient flesh must brook
another inch, an angel's
long silver seams have cinched
in time your ripening globe.

Lie still; you shimmy like a porpoise
in a tank, dart
to the glass and prowling by,
wrestle the water from your back.
Perverse! Perverse and reckless
in such a tender bubble
to kick against the vault.

Lie still; and better
like some antique marble flutist
bow your head and see
through lidded eyes all harmonies—
even the phrase by which is built
the slippery pate; and wonder, to adore
yourself that you were made.

Lie still; the waves must give
your egg to land, amphibian. Ask
when you founder there
what thing you are to rub cheeks
with the winter air; know
once in your avid sight the song
you have forgotten does originate.

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Lawrence Sturhahn

ORCA*

It is late in June in my town when "Jaws" opens. Saturday or Sunday, driving through, I see the line outside the Sequoia Theatre. On the sidewalk, reflected in sun-drenched store windows, a straggling column of self-consciously waiting people, doing *munchies*. Them I saw before I saw the title on the marquee—Wow! And then, the next week, the June 30th issue of *Daily Variety:*

"Jaws" Tops $14 Mil in First Seven Days; House Records Fall

The picture, budgeted around four million (I understand), finally cost eight million to make. That's already a little unreal. With prints, distribution, and advertising coming to another 10 million, the break-even point for Universal is between 18 and 20 million. According to *Variety*: "It is conceivable that the film will be off its total nut in less than three weeks of the U.S. only release."

20 million peanuts—or steel washers, the numbers are that abstract. But on the day I stand in the line myself I think: a theatre capacity of close to 400—times three shows on weekdays (1,200 people), and five on weekends (2,000 people)—times $3 per ticket ($3,600 weekdays; $6,000 weekends)—times seven equals $30,000 a week. That's a figure I can deal with, about 75% of what my house is worth, with a mortgage which is going to take me 30 years to pay off.

> *Joe Doakes is young, between 18 and 29, and single. He has completed high school and may have attended college, earns under $10,000 per year. Not attending school or otherwise unemployed, he likes X-rated pictures about as much as he likes westerns.*
>
> —*Daily Variety*, Aug. 5, 1974

Mythical Joe Doakes, the statistical composite of what is call the *frequent filmgoer*, attends at least twice a month, is distinguished from a *moviegoer* who attends only once a year. And the people who don't attend movies at all (Eeeecch!), they are much older, don't quite have a high school education, and most make less than $10,000 a year.

In the early evening on the day I go to "Jaws", there are mostly Joe and Jane Doakes, the hip and the straight, in their Sunday Northern California threads, standing in the line.

"You know what I heard, man!"

"That it was pure scary . . ."

"Far out!"

At the door, wondering how many of us were out there, I ask the theatre's capacity.

2.

"Getting right to the point," *Variety's* review opens," 'Jaws' is an artistic and commercial smash . . . the satisfaction of a production-problem-plagued film turning out beautifully . . . a film of consummate suspense, tension and terror . . . the Universal release looks like a torrid money-maker everywhere . . ."

When we read a book, listen and watch a play, watch and listen to a movie, who thinks of what the product took to make? A lonely writer sits with his paper; a play's production comes from a relatively small company, the stage craft includes dressing, a set, props. But the fabrication of a film is like marshaling an army, complete with intricate and expensive equipment, people to operate it (grips, props, electricians, make-up, wardrobe, script supervisor, assistant directors, hangers-on, the trucks to carry it and the teamster drivers of those trucks, the meals and rooms on location, the coffee drunk and the sweet rolls eaten. Incorporating the discipline of writing, a director of actors who play it; after that these troops mount it, put the image on the apparently insignificant and relatively fragile band of celluloid.

Electricity, electronics, chemistry; a product of the triumph of science in the late 19th and 20th centuries, the production of a motion picture includes almost all the arts/crafts of all history: writing, acting, set design, costuming, pictorial composition, magic, illusion, special effects (the shark's name was Bruce). It is also a consumer of enormous and sustained energy in a risk-filled field of fragile egos, of needs and wants; after that astronomical amounts of money are in jeopardy.

The original budget—how much is four million dollars really? And double that is finally spent—another abstraction. At least the people on the crew are real, but where do you draw the line between art and craft? Because the camera's a machine that creates a photograph, what is the nature of the work of the man who directs what lights are necessary to illuminate the scene the lens focuses on? And the grip who floats a plastic with his hands while the scene is in progress? Or the make-up—? Either/or, really both, these men and women get paid very well for what they do, and are probably paying off their own 30-year mortgages.

Artistic and commercial smash the review calls the movie; the people involved in its making call it working in *the business*. Motion pictures are art and money, or art *vs.* money, or money and no art, or all art and no money. However any film is described—as being filled with "harrowing sequences" that are "stomach turning" and "convention defying" and, here and there (perhaps), "risible", the idea of commerce and art are always part of the statement. One word describes and delimits the other. It is perhaps inadvertent, but it's certainly automatic, that part of any aesthetic judgement from either critic or *frequent filmgoer* includes how big a box office the film is pulling.

The history of motion pictures is not only the winning-wonderful and losing-sordid tales of producers, directors and stars, but also a list of scientific inventions, and how each expanded or narrowed the aesthetics.

*the killer whale

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In the beginning the camera was set down and tied off to photograph (record) the action of actors on a stage. As the art and craft evolved through the years of silent films—which ended in 1929—the camera assumed primacy because it was the image on the screen that created all the fuss. Long shots, medium shots, close-ups, different size images could be achieved by moving the camera or employing different focal-length lenses. In that cinema the story was told through pictures; words—dialogue—were counterpoint on title cards. And music, in addition to covering the noise of the projector, was a way of enhancing mood or tone. In *cinema* the image is a metaphor for reality, not a reproduction of it. But it's also important to understand the mechanics of the camera and the nature of motion in a film.

A sequence of still photographs on a band of celluloid that moves through the gate of a machine that projects each one individually on the screen—this band, moving at such a speed that, seeing the sequence in one flow, it is the mind that creates the appearance of motion. In fact it is an illusion, and to create it the mechanism of the camera (exactly analogous to the projector except that it accepts light to expose the film) must include gears that pull the celluloid band into the gate, stop it while the emulsion is exposed to light by a shutter that opens and closes, and then move the band so the next frame can be stopped. Not a continuous motion which can be almost silent, it is an intermittent one that emits the inevitable click-clack of camera noise.

As long as you didn't have sound in the film the noise of the camera recording the scene was not a problem. When, in 1929, the sound was to be recorded on the stage too, there was a big problem. The solution to it at the time was to put the noisy camera and its operator into a sound-proof closet that was more or less tied off. Who says that history does not move in cycles; it was back to square 1. In 1929, when the dialogue was suddenly more important than the image, from the unwieldy cabinet filming was very close to being back where it started, the photographing of a stage play. And for a time, very much a verbal and not a visual medium.

Moviegoers and *frequent filmgoers* speak loosely of the *cameraman* of a motion picture. The implication is that he's the one who aims the camera, composes the frame. In fact the contribution of the Director of Photography (the cameraman——cameraperson?) is the lighting of the scene. He also may be responsible for designing the framing of the shot, but another person actually turns the wheels on the geared head and finally frames the action you see on the screen.

Perhaps it started back there when they put the camera operator in the closet, while the man responsible for lighting the scene and the actors in it had to stay outside to check on that. To be in two places at the same time is not possible unless there are two men. In the industry it's the D.P. who is the chief. He does not conventionally handle the camera; the other man—the operator—does.

In the '30s, in the days of slow emulsions which needed a lot of light, and of a heavily accented romantic photographic style of extreme contrast between darks and lights, in the enormous sound stages of Hollywood, Culver City, in the Valley, the lights were myriad, thick and bright. The air must have been like a furnace. But that's changed too, or perhaps *evolved* is a better word, and now many films are made on location (and most television is made in the studio). On Martha's Vineyard, in cantonment for three months, waiting on the weather and Bruce's vagaries and other things, an army—and some navy to handle the boats—the "Jaws" location.

The style of seeing has changed too. Lighting is more natural—which does not mean that it's more simple, but at least the light units are more efficient, and smaller. And the emulsions are very fast by the old standards, their rating capable of being pushed even further in processing.

And there are Directors of Photography who would rather also operate, and some do. It seems practical; the framing of the scene, and the following of the action is as much the image as the lighting of it is.

"Operating is analogous to being a ball player," Mike Chapman said. "It's very much an athletic form. It also has something to do with taste and aesthetics, but that's somewhat over-rated. It's really about eye-hand coordination and doing the equivalent of following a ball and being able to hit it. And it's very much about consistency. You keep trying to hit a .300 season, which means that just day-after-day-after-day-after-day you did it right. And you didn't have peaks and slumps—and you do have peaks and slumps in operating. I mean, I always do. I know when I have good weeks and bad weeks, when I've hit .300 and when I've hit .200, and when I've made really bad errors. And it has to do with the sense that you have to sleep a certain amount of hours a night. You can't drink too much where you've got to work the next day. You have to do all that to keep yourself in shape because it's a very physical job, and its pleasures are physical. Its pleasures are athletic to me.

"To get the shot, that's what it's all about. And at the end of 'Jaws'—on which I was Phil Butler's operator—after five months, which is really a baseball season, I felt that I'd done a very good job. I felt like somebody who had a good .300 season. It came to me about the end of the picture that it was exactly that because we were in Massachusetts, and I was desperately involved in the Red Sox plummeting out of first place in the American League. I mean, I'm a suicidal New England sports fan and I was really thinking a lot about baseball, watching them as they shot through the league in a downward arc. Seeing it on TV, living in motels just like road trips, it came to me that it was just like I was playing baseball."

3.

Going to a big movie—where there's a lot of pre-release publicity along with the word-of-mouth—the thing is that you know a great deal about it before you sit in the seat and the lights go down. You are set psychologically to have it hook you. Have you met anybody who didn't like "Jaws"—wasn't fascinated by it? Horrified they are, but I think people like it too (or, at least, the feelings that it arouses), and they are going into the theatres like there was no tomorrow. Boy, was I *ready*—prepared, like when I was a kid, to shut my eyes if it was too scary.

Across the sand in the moonlight, struggling out of her clothes, a girl runs, splashing joyfully into the calm, ambiguous, menacing, beautiful sea. All those adjectives and more, and some ineffable feelings are in that shot. And what I know is under the sea's surface is not Bruce, but the real thing. And horrified I wait to watch the feeding.

There is to this film a marvelous systole and diastole of tension—shock climax—and then process. Obviously connected intimately to our system, when any picture of the water appears we are jerked back into the same state of apprehension we felt the first time

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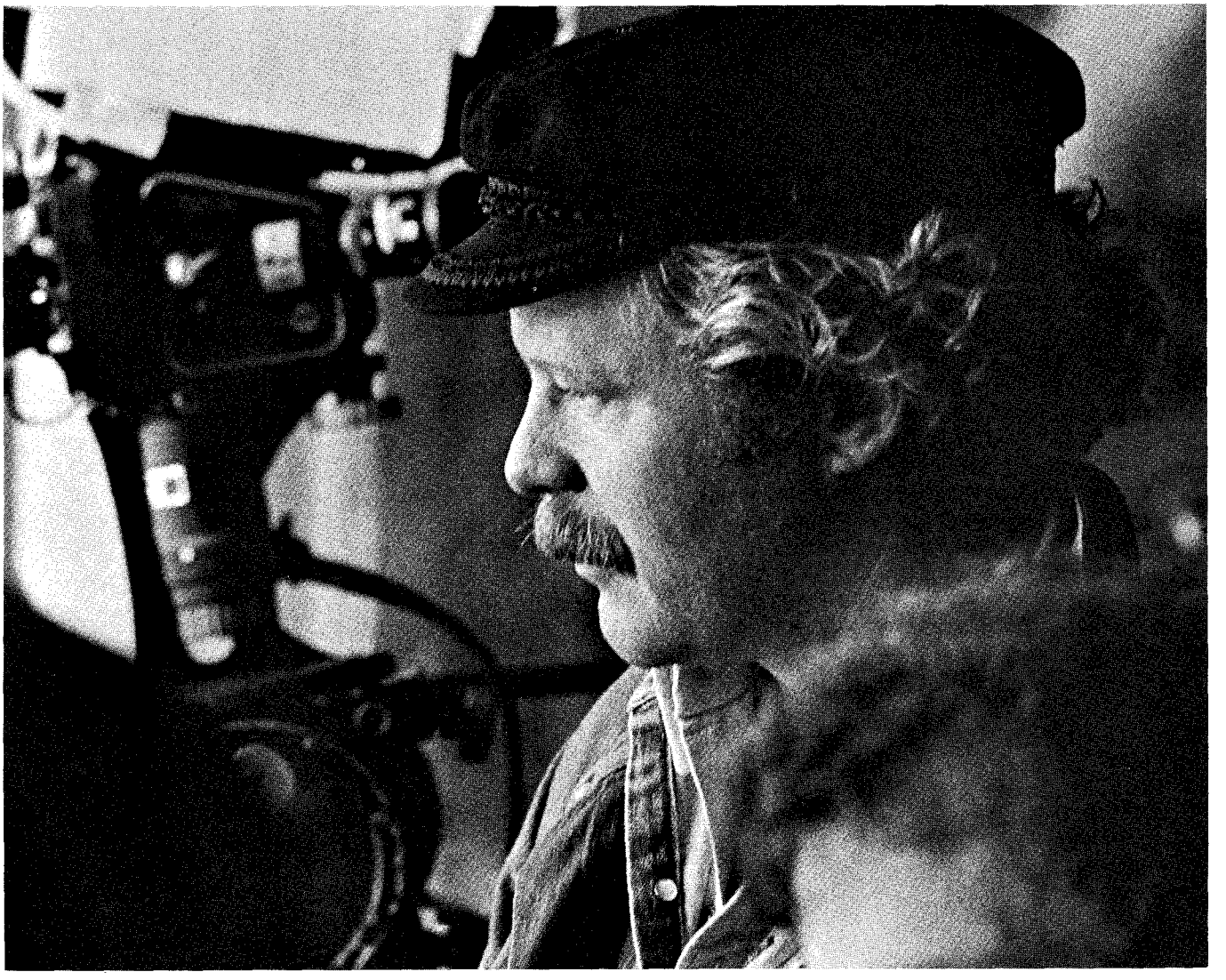

we saw it (—because we know in some preconscious what to be swallowed by a big fish is . . . like Jonah?). Then whatever is going to happen happens, and we are scared and horrified at the same time. And with the climax of those emotions, which we could not endure for very long, cut back to the town and the process narrative of how the old shark hunt is progressing. It is with relief that I return to that, too, calmly, with relief, given time to recharge the anxiety well. Cut back to the water, and it starts all over again.

Not until the film is more than half over does the theatre audience see the shark. Some spooky subjective under-water shots from his supposed point of view, and the results of his presence, blood, and his victim's writhings in the water establish that he's there. And the first view of him is more effective for the wait.

When the police chief (Roy Sheider), the oceanographer (Richard Dreyfuss), and the redeemer Quint (Robert Shaw) set out on board *ORCA*, the film's view narrows to the final contest between characters and ideologies. Action confined to the boat and the space of surrounding sea, it's a wet field on which Armageddon will be fought, and the tension-shock-process form continues. Between confrontations with the nemesis who swims, an eating machine, mysterious barrels hooked by harpoons to his hide, bouncing and plowing through the sea, the sudden shocking views of his head and open jaws, there's the process of catching him: threading of lines through falls, readying of reels, harpoons, guns, the three men carousing for their own relief. Really, of course, the process is not catching him—but being caught themselves. And the plot shows, if you want to look, but how many viewers are looking for the holes? Action and plot are salient in melodrama, which is, in itself, a metaphor for life and not life itself.

"Jaws" is rated PG—parental guidance suggested, and there's some controversy about that ("Rollerball" is rated R, for instance). To my 11-year-old daughter I suggested that I would not let her see the film. According to *Variety*: "the domestic PG rating attests to the fact that implicit dramaturgy is often more effective than explicit carnage." What that means I'm not exactly sure—that because there's a theme the sight of a leg torn off at the hip is not extreme? I am pretty sure what I think of the rating system altogether: we shouldn't have to need it, but apparently we do—what else is new? This autumn we are having Family Hour on televison.

And what, aside from its record-breaking ability to pull box-office, does the picture mean? Is it a triumph in the end? Is evil to be eliminated by a mutual sacrifice, a trade-off, the human part of which is compulsively insane? Does one cancel the other out? When Captain Quint is engorged whole (so to speak) is that symbolic? Are Quint and the shark not the obverse sides of the same idea, the eternal dramatic switch from persecutor to victim and back? Although I think that's it, and that— as in any classic film— it's the metaphor, even if not quite un-

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derstood, that brings in the patrons, at this moment it doesn't matter to me—or I don't want to make a verbal choice. My belief is that our collective visual acumen is so intangible, so individual, that we don't have codes for it yet. Each of us seeing what we see in a movie is enough for now, and for each of us it's different. My trip is to let the movie happen.

Still, introduced by the excruciating sound of his fingernails scraping across a chalk board at a meeting of the Amity Town Supervisors, Quint, played by Robert Shaw, and the shark, played by Bruce, come to be more and more the obverse and reverse of one idea, and it's implacable. They have to consume each other; their lust is towards death. And the lust of Sheider and Dreyfuss—the survivors—life?

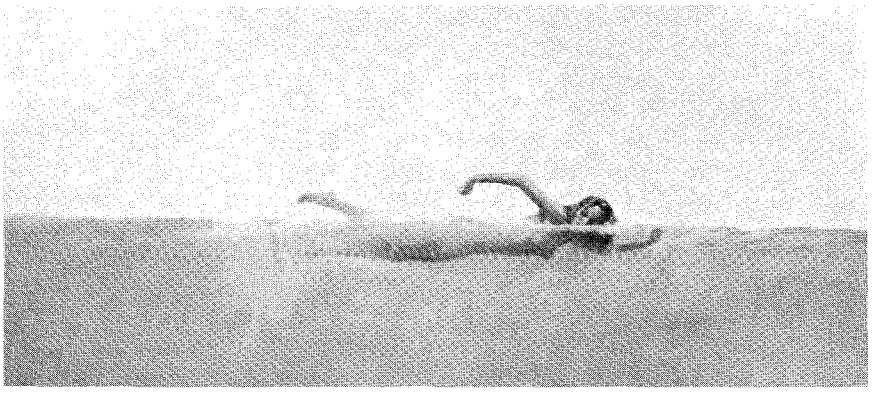
Cut to the water.

4.

The big winner in the Academy Awards in 1975 was "Godfather II", written, directed, and produced by Francis Ford Coppola. The year 1974, out of which the nominations for the awards came, was the second largest box office year in the history of the industry. Compared to 1946—after World War II, and before television—when the total was $1.692 *billion*, as of January, 1975, the total of the past year was estimated at just slightly less—17 million less—for a total of $1.675 *billion*. After what the stock market people refer to as an "adjustment" in the box office in the first cold part of this year, it appears as though 1975 will come close or exceed a record high too. And it's an open secret that, as in the 1930s, when times are hard, and people feel themselves to be between a rock and a hard place, they seek an escape which motion pictures (in competition with television now) apparently provide.

By no means making a negative judgement on "Godfather II"—a fascinating, stylistic, innovatively formed presentation of an epic *cops & robbers* genre film—it is significant that expensive and well-received pictures usually end up being nominated. By this equation, on its way to being the biggest grossing film of all time, can "Jaws" not be nominated? (I would hazard a guess that the-man-from-Walt-Disney will win something for building Bruce, too.)

Contrary to a popular notion that the way to make more (and by implication, *more artistic)* movies is to bring them in for less coin up front, the industry equation is that the more spent the better the chance for more people lining up to buy the tickets. Among the reasons for the validity of the theory is that, as has always been believed, there is a draw in that special quality that makes certain actors into *stars*. So the appearance of Marlon Brando in a film will guarantee his followers' coming to see him, and thus he is "bankable". Meaning, obviously, if you have him committed to the film you are saying this film is guaranteed to bring in x number of dollars. And if the actor and his agent both know this, they aren't going to ask for a prime fee to perform—right out front?



By the same token, if the story of the film is known—adapted from a popular play or novel, a certain segment of the audience potential will want to attend the movie because of that. And if the author/agent know this, so . . .

Although less identified as "bankable" in the industry in the United States than in Europe, where a Truffaut or Bergman or Fellini mean something special, certain directors are also bankable—a Kubrick, Coppola, Huston. The *wunderkind*, Spielberg, who directed "Jaws" seems to be on the way, for sure.

Finally, there's that facility that motion pictures have for going anywhere in time and space, recording any vision that stagecraft and costuming and special effects (which Hollywood has always been an acknowledged master of) can create, reinforce, or give life to. The darkest and lightest of a person's visions, both prefiguring of the future, and the remembrance of things past that all humans harbor, with a modicum of publicity before the release, this isn't bankable too? Israelites crossing the Red Sea without getting their feet wet? How it looks when an ocean liner capsizes and sinks? A building with a hundred floors burning? What happens in an earthquake, not in 1906, but now? Interplanetary travel on Pan Am in 2001 A.D.? And (without being the victim) how a Great White Shark attacks?

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Living in troubled times as we do, accepting the general statement that motion pictures are an escape from the crunch of daily reality, their visions of apocalypse also demystify it. What we fear most is the unknown—after that, the fear itself. We may be looking only at someone else's vision, and it may be very strong and also simplistic or absurd, but in seeing the process of the happening we can find a balm.

Yet the negative cost of a major motion picture is only the beginning. After somebody pays for that, there is still the cost of getting all the prints for all the theatres. And paying for the advertising to let the hungry people know it's coming. That's the cost of distribution, and the bigger the splash you want the more you pay to make the dive. These days these costs are often more than it took to make the picture to start. It's as if you should add that figure to the budget of the film.

In 1974 "Earthquake," "Godfather II," "Airport 1975," "Towering Inferno," in 1975 (so far) "Rollerball," "The Wind and the Lion," "Nashville," "Jaws." These years are the years of the big films, and that, ironically, because of the state of the economy in the country. 'Apocalypse Chic' is sometimes how these films are classified generically, and given our times and some of its portents, is it not an apt phrase? The ice age is come and we are running out of fuel—what else is new?

Drama in either theatre or film is obviously an ordered reproduction of the experience of living, and for this reason, since living is haphazard and anticlimactic, always unreal. You can, if you look, see the plot devices in "Jaws" as you can in most dramatic linear films. But the artifice is no more difficult to accept than is the artifice of any film being a photograph of supposedly real things, which becomes, with the interaction of audience in the interface, also an illusion.

If film-as-art used to be a question raised by pedants and snobs, there were as many different answers as there were questioners. The creation of a film—whatever its crass economics —is still a creation of these times which appeals to enormous numbers of people who have to work hard to live in the times. At Lascaux the cave paintings were first seen by the people in that one cave. "Heh," they must have said, "that's nice! Them deer really look like deer." That's craft. After the people from the next cave were invited to admire the work it started being art. And if the painter didn't have as much time to hunt because of his painting, maybe some wise ass suggested he should collect a small tribute—a chicken leg or a piece of pelt? And he, the one who is going to run the exhibition, of course he will take his cut for keeping the books and sweeping up after the patrons leave.

A magnificently crafted film, a well acted film, a beautifully photographed film, on one level the "Jaws" script is about the effect of a killer shark on a resort community dependent on its beaches. On another level it presents a metaphor about evil and survival, painted in the shades of gray which, in our time, we can recognize as their nature. "Jaws" is enthralling while it's terrifying, so what else do you want? If a good fat chicken costs $3 in the market I go to, the experience of the film I wouldn't trade a chicken for? No way! □

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Stephen Minot

The New, Now Post-Contemporary Para-Criticism

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. . . and still the Queen cried "Faster! Faster!" and dragged her along. "Are we nearly there ?" Alice managed to pant out at last.

"Nearly there!" the Queen repeated. "Why, we passed it ten minutes ago! Faster!"

—Lewis Carroll

Where are we? What's *now*? It's a tricky game, trying to catch the literary present. It won't stand still like the past. It's forever bobbing ahead. Pinning it down is like trying to pounce on your own shadow.

Where are we going? The future is even more agile. It changes form before our very eyes. Where will our shadows be tomorrow?

The best of these four now-and-future studies makes a game of it all, takes delight in the pursuit, gives pleasure in the act of searching. The middle range is solid, stolid, and a bit musty. The least successful is shrill, hysterical, dogmatic. Plenty to choose from.

As a group, they share certain irritants in varying degrees. A concern for surface, for example. One is reminded at times of television's instant replay—fascinating but scarcely penetrating. And a monotonous scorn for the past. At worst, this becomes an adolescent's rage against his father, his teacher, his mentor.

Their appeal is stronger, though. When you're lost, even a crude or inaccurate map is valuable. And we are certainly unsure of the way. As in Hollywood, the great stars of literature are dead; and thanks to instant nostalgia, they're already history. Whether you define The Moderns as Hemingway-Faulkner-Fitzgerald or prefer the innovators like Joyce, Miller, and Djuna Barnes, they're all behind us—even the survivors.

More significant, the star system itself has passed. We're surrounded by unnamed constellations of stylists and every sky-chart differs.

Each of these four volumes employs a distinctly different critical method and each approach has inherent strengths and limitations. Bellamy's *The New Fiction* is a series of interviews with novelists; Federman's *Surfiction* is an anthology, articles selected or commissioned to vibrate on the same wavelength; Klinkowitz's *Literary Disruptions* is straight and cautious literary analysis; Hassan's *Paracriticisms* is a highly innovative, liberated essay form, verging on poetry. This list is not in order of their success, since each has a different critical goal, but it *is* in the order of their penetration into the heart of the matter.

* * *

The appeal of interviews is growing. *The Paris Review* found a broader readership for their *Writers at Work* than for the magazine itself and soon went into sequels. Bellamy's collection is fascinating, but it does blur a bit with the earlier series. ("There was this great interview with Tom Wolfe in *Writers at Work*—or was it in that Bellamy collection?")

The advantages of the approach are many: Although a good interviewer, like Bellamy and his fellow workers, does his homework, his job is less taxing than it would be to write a detailed critical essay on the work of the same author. Second, although a cooperative author (like most but not all in this series) tries to open up genuine vistas into his own work and goes over the typescript, editing and adding, he is not expected to put in the time or effort required to write a critical article. Finally, although a reader does his best to pick out the nuggets from these conversations, he does not have to labor as he would over a critical analysis.

So interviewer, novelist, and reader all get off with less sweat. And less of a return. Not *no* return; merely thin.

The selection Bellamy makes is without surprises. In order of their appearance: Barth, Oates, Gass, Barthelme, Sukenick, Wolfe, Hawkes, Sontag, Reed, Kosinski, Gardner, and Vonnegut. A list of winners.

There is a widely held notion that "getting it from the horse's mouth" provides a hot tip. Unfortunately, the information so gathered is no more reliable in the literary world than at the racetrack. Authors rarely get at the heart of what they mean in fiction. If they could, they would be critics, not novelists. Knowing this, they often dodge questions with irony, playing jokes on the listener and ultimately the reader; or they bounce over the surface, cocktail-party style; or they become hung up on some trivial concern, leaving the real insights to their fictional characters.

Item: Joyce Carol Oates is so prolific she is a candidate for the *Guinness Book of World Records*. On any given month two or three of her stories can be found in the "current periodicals" section of any library. They appear in quarterlies, qualities, (all but the *New Yorker*), and the women's magazines. She has filled four volumes with short stories, most of which were written in a ten-year span. With her other hand she has written six novels, three books of poetry, two plays, and a book on tragedy. That's one volume every nine months for ten years.

So what do we hear from the horse's mouth via Joe Bellamy? "Most of the time I do nothing. . . . I waste most of my time, in daydreaming, in drawing faces on pieces of paper. . . .

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I spend a lot of time looking at the river."

What do we do with this gem? Either she is indulging in arch irony and Miss Oates is a greater comedian than we had imagined, or perhaps she is lying and we must assume that she is more devious than we had previously thought, or perhaps she really believes what she said and so is far closer to the edge than we had feared.

Now the interviewer can leave those conjectures hanging without apologies. He's just getting the facts, Ma'am. A critic, on the other hand, has to tangle with them, has to add further evidence, has to come to some conclusion, has to let his reputation hang on the validity of his argument.

Item: John Hawkes is an author whose style has an opaque quality. Characters and events move as if through a film. Even in *The Blood Oranges*, his latest and most gentle, the mists prevail. We are never quite sure of what country we are in; scenes are veiled.

Here is an author whose style is highly individualistic and deserves analysis. And his themes are subtle, deserving exploration. Yet in the interview by Robert Scholes, Mr. Hawkes appears to be primarily interested in the psychological and aesthetic implications of wife-swapping. It occurs early (p. 99) and logically in connection with *The Blood Oranges*. It continues on the next page. Scholes manages to get him off the subject, but by page 110 of the interview Hawkes says "Let's get back to wife-swapping." So it continues to the end of the interview.

These things happen in conversations. Particularly late at night. But when tunnel-vision concerns of the moment are frozen on the page, readers are cheated.

And then there are the uncooperative subjects. As every talk-show interviewer knows, even the best and the brightest sometimes come on stage in a flip mood with or without a couple of drinks and there isn't much you can do with them. So it is with Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., being earnestly interviewed by Bellamy and Jon Casey working in tandem.

Item: "Here are two things that ruined my earlier life: life insurance and envy."

But seriously, what about writing?

"I've often thought of taking one of my thin books. . . and adding a sash weight to it just to give someone the bulk he needs to pay seven or eight dollars for the thing. . . ."

What about the future of fiction?

"There's . . . the Bernard Geis solution, which is to print the book on ¾-inch plywood, each page, and to print the type in the width of a newspaper column down the middle of the plywood. Then you've got a good-size book."

So what else is new?

The weaknesses of this volume are inherent in the interview approach. And so are the pleasures. It is always fascinating to listen to authors you admire—or detest—even when they don't say very much. And some manage to use the interview form to say more than one expected. John Barth, Susan Sontag, and Tom Wolfe are the stars.

The Barth interview is notable because he manages to outline his views on the use of myth. From this he is able to clarify what be believes is dead in the novel (straight narrative, routine psychological analysis) and where the new growth is (direct use of myth, ironic use of old forms, literary possibilities pushed to the point of exhaustion).

The Barth interview is solid and informative not because we are close to a man speaking off the top of his head but because we are listening to a man recall as accurately as he can a brilliant essay he published in the *Atlantic* in 1967 and reprinted in Federman's *Surfiction* in 1975. The horse's mouth in this case is not the author chatting with an interviewer but the essay which is fortunately available to us all in print.

Susan Sontag's interview is a dazzling display of a sharp, critical mind at work. We discover little about her own two novels or her short stories, but we learn a great deal about those whom she considers important (Burroughs, Borges, Barthelme, Leonard Michaels, Ishmael Reed) and where she thinks fiction is going (". . .more and more open to the influence of the other media. . . .").

Tom Wolfe's appeal is not as literary, but it is a politically sharp argument. He is down on fiction as exhausted and up on the use of fact mixed with fantasy. What he works for is "the thrill of recognition." Authors who achieve this include men like Henry Miller, Celine, Herbert Gold (in *Fathers*), and Truman Capote, among others. Regardless of whether one agrees, the argument is presented with conviction, with logic, and with evidence. Wolfe, a closet Ph.D., comes on strong. One almost forgets that this isn't a critical essay. And perhaps this is the best one can say of an interview.

* * *

Raymond Federman's *Surfiction* is an anthology, but it is not intended as a balanced view. He has selected contributors who are believers in the cause. Together they present a militant argument—not just what *is* in fiction today but what *will be*—whether we like it or not.

His contributors include major figures like Barth and Calvino, rising militants like Sukenick and Kostelanetz, a few moderates like Jerome Klinkowitz, and some critics of Continental fiction such as Jean Ricardou and Robert Pynsent.

Federman's initial definition of his titular term, *surfiction*, is reasonable enough:

> *And so, for me, the only fiction that still means something today is the kind of fiction that tries to explore the possibilities of fiction; the kind of fiction that challenges the tradition that governs it; the kind of fiction that constantly renews our faith in man's imagination. . . .*

This is a position which one might imagine Barth supporting—though doubtless he would clean up the redundancies and change the phrase "challenges. . .tradition" to "makes imaginative and ironic use of tradition."

When Federman trumpets his battle cry, however, the sound becomes shrill.

> *In the fiction of the future, all distinctions between the real and the imaginary, between the conscious and the subconscious, between the past and the present, between truth and untruth will be abolished.*

Abolished? By whom? Why and how? Heedless, he plunges on with revolutionary intensity:

> *All forms of duplicity will disappear. And above all, all forms of duality will be negated—especially duality: that double-headed monster which, for centuries now, has subjected us to a system of values, an ethical and aesthetical system based on the principles of good and bad, true and false, beautiful and ugly.*

Strange indeed that to free fiction from the terrible dualities of good and bad, true and false, Raymond Federman must invest literary criticism with a proscriptive duality of truth and error the likes of which have not been seen since the inquisition.

Strange also that to present his case for literary anarchy he must so

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rigidly, one might almost say militarily, present his dicta in the form of unnegotiable demands.

"Proposition One" strikes hard against the tradition of writing which moves from left to right in lines which progress from the top of the page downward. He finds such uniformity "*boring* and *restrictive*" (italics *his*). He cries out for a whole new system in typography and topology. With chilling authoritarianism he demands that "All the rules and principles of printing and bookmaking must be forced to change. . . ."

Forced? In the name of freedom?

"Proposition Two" informs us that "life is chaos" and that because of this "linear and orderly narration is no longer possible." *No longer?* Was life once orderly back in the days when men wrote orderly plots? When did it all change? With the atomic bomb, perhaps? Kent State?

Or might we consider a counterproposal: that life has always been messy, far too cluttered for fiction.

"Proposition Three" is a fanfare for irrelevance. ". . .the fiction writer can, at any time, introduce material (quotations, pictures, diagrams. . .doodles, etc.) totally unrelated to the story he is in the process of telling."

There are unanswered questions here. Doesn't the writer have that freedom today? And didn't he in the 19th century as well? Hasn't he always? Or does Federman mean that the writer has some basic right to *publish* such work and to have his work read by an unwilling public? Now that's another ball game.

"Proposition Four" attacks meaning in fiction. The novel of the future "will be seemingly devoid of any meaning, it will be deliberately illogical, irrational, unrealistic, non sequitur, and incoherent."

All this would seem more alarming if it were not for the fact that almost every proposition was presented fifty years ago under the banner of the Dadaists. Oddly, Federman makes no claim to have been reincarnated from that movement. He writes as if his views sprang fully formed from his own decade.

And so do his contributors. In some cases, like Richard Kostelanetz's "New Fiction in America" and Jean Ricardou's "Nouveau Roman, Tel Quel," the analysis tends to become largely descriptive—examples of fiction in which characters are given three or four names, two different professions, conflicting descriptions; plots which are cleverly designed to confuse, and the like.

The fact that one *can* write like that is too obvious for debate; and the fact that it is in some small measure being published both here and abroad is also an undebatable fact. What one longs to hear, however, is a calm, honest argument defending either the value or the pleasure of reading it.

Fortunately, Federman is the low point of his own book. There are informative articles by Robert Pynsent (the German scene) and Jerome Klinkowitz (more about him shortly), and an illustrative sample of Dadaist nonsense by Jacques Ehrmann.

The high points of the collection are the contributions by Barth and Italo Calvino. Although both men are listed by Federman in his introduction as working in the direction he demands for us all, neither author is seriously interested in writing from right to left (Proposition One) or ignoring plot (Proposition Two) or adding nonsensical irrelevancies for the fun of it (Proposition Three) or abandoning meaning (Proposition Four). On the contrary, both men are craftsmen who ingeniously refashion a great variety of literary conventions, using tradition to create ironies, satires, and to suggest insights.

Barth and Calvino are really in the wrong collection. They are outnumbered by latter-day Dadaists. For some readers, their presence alone saves the book.

* * *

Jerome Klinkowitz is in a different league. He supports fiction. His thesis is simple: that until the late '60s, the novel was beginning to lose force, lose freshness because of a lack of innovation; and that beginning with the political and literary disruptions of 1969-70 "and continuing through the 1970s" there has been a "major development in the genre" which he describes as its "rebirth".

The authors he selects (admittedly among many) to represent that rebirth are Vonnegut, Barthelme, Kosinski, Imamu Baraka, James Park Sloan, Sukenick, Federman, and Gilbert Sorrentino. There is not a reader of contemporary fiction who would not argue with that list (as indeed I will shortly), but it is certainly enough to suggest that something fresh is going on.

"Fiction breeds its own continuity"—the opening of his Prologue. And so does literary criticism. Klinkowitz is a cautious analyst working with a carefully chosen list of major figures, using a style which is only a half-step looser than a Ph.D. thesis. He supports his analysis with ample documentation. He footnotes. He describes each work with more detail than one really needs.

But after the shrill hysteria of Raymond Federman's critical bullhorn, all this is forgiven. Indeed, of the three works discussed so far, Klinkowitz's is the first to describe the literary scene in objective terms. His study has a tremendous advantage over interviews in the same way that map-makers flying overhead do better than those stumbling through the jungle on foot. And while his caution may bother the militants whose major concern is revolution, his analysis deals with what is really here.

I have two reservations. First, it is too neat to argue that everything good in literature sprang from that one academic year, '69-'70. Some, like Vonnegut, were well launched long before that magical year (*Mother Night* was published in 1962); others, like Barthelme, were developing so independently that one can hardly sense their being touched by history. Indeed, that bifurcated date probably holds no more significance than 1945 or 1918.

No more and no less. Yes, there *was* a war here on the home front and it came to an end abruptly and it probably had more impact on fiction and poetry and education than did the end of the Korean War or the Vietnam War—dates which are blurred in negotiations and frustrations. The '69-'70 date is easy to remember. If we remind ourselves that it is only a short-hand phrase for "the-late-sixties-and-early seventies," we can excuse what might be considered an oversimplification.

My second reservation runs deeper. Because he is presenting a case, a thesis, an argument, Klinkowitz has walled himself off from some highly effective agents of literary disruptions who were in full swing before that magic year of '69-'70. He has also eliminated others because they are not American authors. If I were to make up a list of authors who appear at the moment to have the greatest impact on the fiction of young writers today (and who are therefore the most effective "literary disruptions" for our decade), I would adopt only one of his authors, Donald Barthelme, and add the following: Barth, Marquez, Borges, and Pynchon. None of these novelists were rad-

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ically affected by the political disruptions of the late '60s (though both Barth and Pynchon used them as subject matter) so none really fit Klinkowitz's thesis. But they are the ones with clout.

Reservations aside, this is a first-rate analysis. Solid work. Logical and clear. It is astonishing that the time-honored, slightly creaking machinery of literary scholarship can be used to describe the innovators in fiction. Astonishing but true.

* * *

Three volumes are enough for any one review. But to stop here would be to suggest that no matter how concerned a critic may be for freshness and innovation in fictional style, he still must write in the most conventional language. Bellamy, Klinkowitz, and even Federman at his most militant moments turn out a conservative, formalized prose with that faint, musty quality of the *PMLA*. One might think that literary freedom is a quality critics can only admire from afar—like womenfolk writing about their warriors on the front lines.

Not so with Ihab Hassan. His *Paracriticisms* is a delight not only in statement but—wonder of wonders—in style.

". . .If we need a literary theory at all, it is a theory of playful discontinuity." Fresh air!

"The sense of discontinuity is hard for critics to achieve." Yes indeed. Each of the three volumes discussed so far is weighed down with the requirements of a heavy argument.

"Criticism. . .should offer the reader empty spaces, silences in which he can meet himself in the presence of literature. This is paracriticism: an attempt to recover the art of multivocation."

With this unorthodox, light and airy notion—and armed with a dazzling mind—Hassan has assembled seven explosions of thought on such varied subjects as the nature of criticism, a bibliography of "POSTmodernISM," an excursion into Finnegans Wake, informed speculations (non-militant) about the fiction of the future, and some "Models of Transformation" in which his literary concerns spill out into speculations on the future of man.

His typography is constantly shifting—columns on the left (leaving plenty of white space), blocks in italics, conventional pages, and without warning a flurry of free verse. Digressions are often labeled in caps: "DIGRESSION"; and because he is no Dadaist he is careful to lead us back into his most carefully constructed argument with "END OF DIGRESSION".

Hassan sees no real division between the literary act and the act of living. He is strong on unity. In his section on a universal consciousness he draws together all the arts in this way:

> *Item: The creative process, like the Holy Ghost, invades and unifies all media; television and telepathy, the famous Letter and spirit writing, film and shadows in Plato's cave, copulation and language, become one.*
>
> *Item: The book wants to include everything. . . . It wants to become* the *universe.*

His style ripples with ironies, parodies, glittering insights, and, yes, even humor. He presents arguments in different voices, a critical ventriloquist. But the greatest irony of all was not planned by Ihab Hassan. On the flyleaf—both front and back—is a long, heavy, humorless critique which misses the very spirit of Hassan's soaring thought. The author of this dubious tribute is Raymond Federman.

Hassan rises above the others partly because he takes chances (which no collection of interviews can), partly because he does not confuse literary sensibilities and political commitments, partly because he refuses to adopt the conventions of scholarship. But none of this could succeed without a mind which is just as at home with *Finnegans Wake* as with Buckminster Fuller's $\frac{n^2 - n}{2}$.

* * *

Fiction takes a beating in all four of these volumes; as a genre it is generally held to be slow to move—though not without hope. All agree that in innovation there is life. All stress form and texture over content and character. Of the four, however, only Hassan has looked in the mirror and asked the question, Is criticism dead?

No, it is not dead. But it has been slower to move than fiction, less responsive to public needs, more burdened with tradition and dogma, more fearful of stylistic departures. It is ill-equipped for the lively game of pouncing on our own shadow. The most encouraging disruption in the critical field is the advent of paracriticism. □

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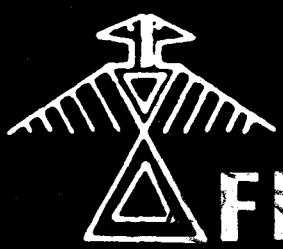

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